Exciting Adventures

ARGOSY

RED STAR MAGAZINE 11-1

NOV. 1 Every Other Wednesday 10 cts.

In This Issue

I Escaped the NAZIS Via the Underground

HENRY FONDA
Starring in
"Wild Geese Calling"
a 20th Century-Fox Picture

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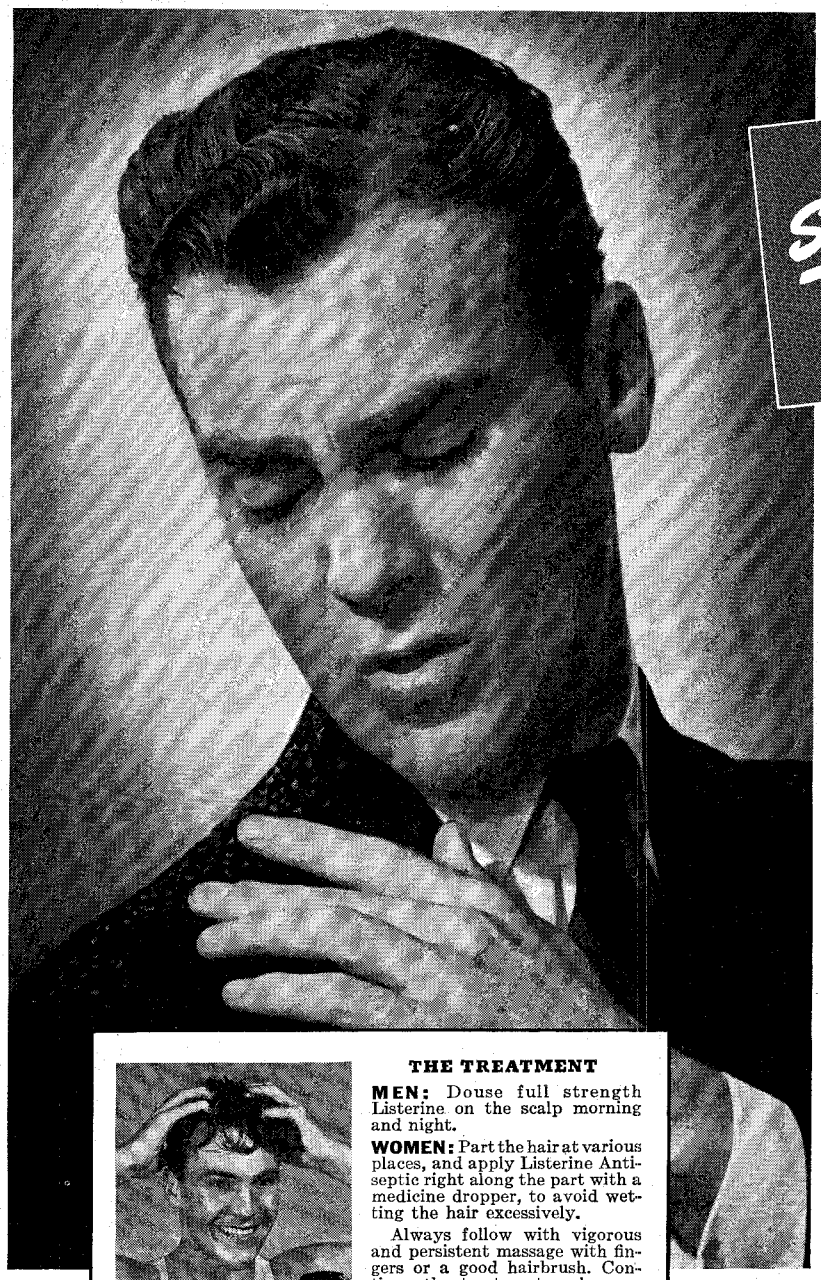
A "back-seat driver"
gets your goat . . .

infectious dandruff

gets it faster!



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WHAT makes the infectious type of dandruff so annoying, so distressing, are those troublesome flakes on collar or dress . . . and the scalp irritation and itching . . . that so often accompany the condition.

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Start right in with Listerine Antiseptic and massage. This is the medical treatment that has shown such amazing results in a substantial majority of clinical test cases . . . the treatment that has also helped thousands of other people.

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Listerine Antiseptic kills millions of germs on scalp and hair, including Pityrosporum ovale, the strange "Bottle Bacillus" recognized by many outstanding dandruff specialists as a causative agent of infectious dandruff.

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buy the ***BIG*** *bottle . . . most for your money*

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DO WE HAVE TO DIE?

A strange man in Los Angeles, known as "The Voice of Two Worlds," reveals the story of a remarkable system that often leads to almost unbelievable improvement in power of mind, achievement of brilliant business and professional success and new happiness. Many report improvement in health. Others tell of increased bodily strength, magnetic personality, courage and poise.

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He maintains that man, instead of being limited by a one-man-power mind, has within him the mind-power of a thousand men or more as well as the energy-power of the universe which can be used in his daily affairs. He states that this sleeping giant of mind-power, when awakened, can make a man capable of surprising accomplishments, from the prolonging of youth, to success in many fields. To that eternal question, "Do we have to die?" his answer is astounding.

The author states the time has come for this long-hidden system to be disclosed to the Western world, and offers to send his amazing 9,000-word treatise—which reveals many startling results—to sincere readers of this publication, free of cost or obligation. For your free copy, address the Institute of Mentalphysics, 213 South Hobart Blvd., Dept. 103 E, Los Angeles, Calif. Readers are urged to write promptly, as only a limited number of the free treatises have been printed

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ARGOSY

America's Oldest and Best All-Fiction Magazine

Volume 311 | CONTENTS FOR NOVEMBER 1, 1941 | Number 3

Coming Soon

The mystery novel of the year! Laid against an exotic, tropical background, this story traces a strange and intricate pattern of crime. Here is swift, violent action; here are fascinating people, caught in a vast web of murder and international intrigue. Don't miss

Assignment In Guiana

By

GEORGE HARMON COXE

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This magazine is on sale every other Wednesday

A RED STAR *Magazine*

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"THE JAWS OF DEATH CLAMPED DOWN ON ME!"

A true experience of BALLARD DEAN, *Kirkland, Washington*

"THE THING sprang out of the earth one bitterly cold evening as I was returning to camp after an all-day deer hunt," writes Mr. Dean. "I suffered excruciating agony, as it bit into my leg. It was a bear trap, illegally set for deer.

"FRANTICALLY, I TRIED TO GET LOOSE as the cold knifed through my clothing. With sinking heart, I found my struggles of no avail. In a few hours, if help could not be summoned, I would freeze to death. Darkness came on as I fought hopelessly with the strong steel jaws.

"THEN I THOUGHT OF MY FLASHLIGHT. There was a chance that other returning hunters might be in the woods. Flashing the bright beam off and on, my efforts were finally rewarded. Thanks to those 'Eveready' *fresh* DATED batteries, two men saw my signal and rescued me from that death trap.

(*Signed*) Ballard Dean

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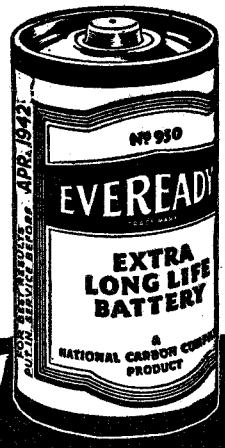

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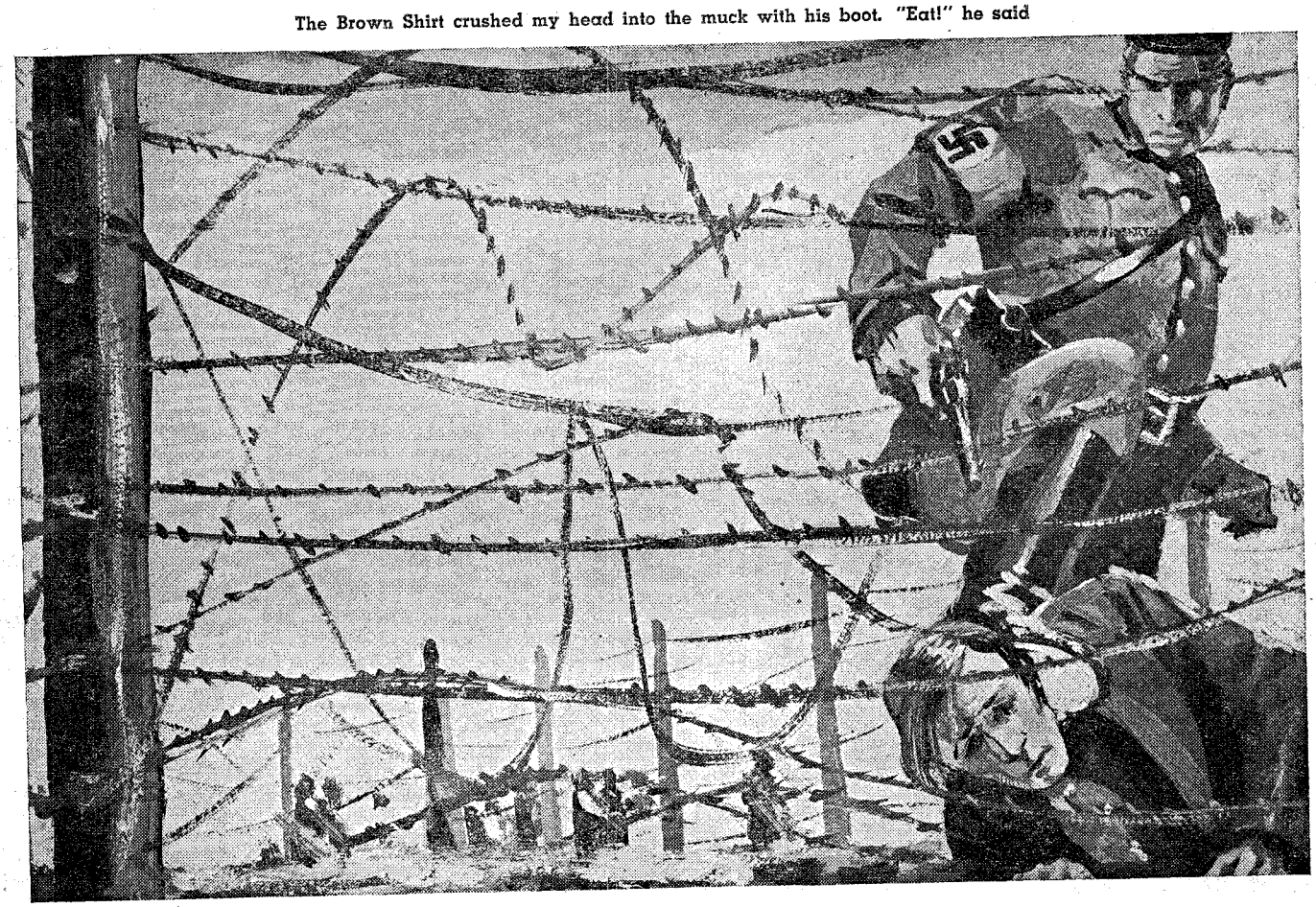
I Escaped via the

The Brown Shirt crushed my head into the muck with his boot. "Eat!" he said



The personal story of one man who managed to gain his freedom from the horrors of a concentration camp—and a glimpse at the inside workings of the system that has freed hundreds. But not enough, America—not enough!

"GET away from that barbed wire!" The fat Brown Shirt came slopping heavily across the exercise yard from the ramshackle row of internment barracks, fumbling for the revolver under his dripping raincoat. "Get away—"

I stuffed the scrap of paper into my mouth and chewed desperately. My mouth was dry but I managed somehow to force enough saliva to moisten it, and swallow.

The paper was gone by the time the Brown Shirt reached me and halted. He stood there for a moment spraddle-legged, the way fat men stand, regarding me slyly; then slid the revolver back into its holster, straightened his raincoat and drew on the gloves thrust into his belt.

"What are you eating?" he said, and flexed his fingers with calculated deliberation.

"Nothing."

"Nothing, eh?"

The Brown Shirt struck me in the mouth.

I reeled, my foot slipped in the mud and filth of the yard and I sprawled forward on my face. I felt no pain—yet: only a stunned shock.

"Now you may eat, *schweinhund*." The Brown Shirt's voice came with a rasping sneer as from a great distance. "Eat, like the pig-dog you are." A heavy boot thrust my face into the stinking muck. "Eat, I say!"

Finally the boot was removed and I raised my head.

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the Nazis underground

"Chew!"

I made chewing motions with my broken mouth.

"*Ach,* that iss goot."

A hobnailed boot-heel ground my fingers into the mud; and as the exquisite agony of breaking bones flowed up my arm I buried my face again in the filth of the yard to keep from screaming.

I lay there, my whole body shuddering uncontrollably; then the Brown Shirt spat and I could hear the *slup, slup, slup* of his boots in the mud as he walked away.

At length I pushed myself up on my good hand, rose slowly to my feet and stumbled toward the line of ancient stables the French had hastily transformed into internment barracks. As I reached my own stable my stomach seemed to turn over inside me; my knees went limp and I leaned against the clammy wall, retching feebly. . . .

SOON after Adolph Hitler came to power I had fled over the border into France. This had been necessary because I was a liberal, an outspoken opponent of Nazism, and a Jew—and because a squad of Brown Shirts was close at my heels.

I settled in the Midi and practiced my profession, keeping out of the limelight as much as possible and praying that Germany would eventually cure itself of the Nazi canker and I could return.

When France declared war, gendarmes hustled me away to an internment camp in a small town northeast of Paris with other German aliens, most of them refugees like myself. None of us were overly alarmed then; but as the

By "Jon Hendel"

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One of the great prizes snatched from Nazi hands: Lion Feuchtwanger, the author, arriving in New York

Nazi panzer divisions rolled through Holland, Belgium and on into France our apprehension grew. We knew what would happen to us if the Germans came.

When the Germans did come, terror seized us. Some committed suicide. The means for doing it were crude and unsatisfactory and they made a rather messy job of it, but they succeeded.

After the soldiers came a group of Brown Shirts who took over the administration of the camp. They left the French jailers in actual charge of the policing while they prepared lists of the prisoners to be submitted to the Gestapo.

There were more suicides. Then two of the refugees escaped mysteriously, without leaving the slightest hint as to the manner of their going, and a fantastic rumor swept the camp of an underground railroad outside that was speeding them out of the reach of the Nazi vengeance.

Nobody knew where the rumor started, but the frantic refugees seized on it as they would on any possibility offering the slightest hope.

Some, however, took little stock in the story.

"If the underground gets *me* away," a man who had once been well known in Austria as a coming playwright told me with patent sarcasm, "I promise to see that directions on how to reach the first station are placed under a flat stone somewhere along the barbed wire next to the woods."

We managed a laugh at the bitter irony of the feeble joke. But the next morning the playwright was gone.

I kept my friend's promise to myself, scarcely daring even to hope. With all the casualness I could command I haunted that section of the barbed-wire fence surrounding the camp in an increasing agony of expectancy. There was no flat stone beneath it anywhere big enough to conceal a match head; nor did any appear.

Then one night it rained. It was still raining in the morning when I went to look.

My breath caught in my throat; I had to grip my hands to keep from rushing forward. For a flat stone lay there now, one I had never seen before. Exercising the utmost control, I drifted toward it, slipped elaborately in the gluey footing and dropped to one knee.

When I rose I had a scrap of paper in my hand.

It was then that the fat Brown Shirt emerged from behind the line of barracks, and I crammed the paper hastily into my mouth.

But the words that had been scrawled on that paper I shall remember forever:

8:00—gate 3—14 rue Flauberg

I SAT on my moldy straw mattress, my eyes fixed on the faintly glowing dial of my watch. My hand, which had been roughly dressed by one of the refugee doctors with the crude materials available, ached dully; but I was scarcely aware of the pain.

It was almost eight o'clock and the mad sense of elation that had come with the prospect of freedom was beginning to wear off. Could it be real, I wondered, or was it just another device of the Nazi inquisitioners to torture and slay?

I sat for a moment undecided. Freedom or death? But it would be death for me anyway, sooner or later, and without even a chance for freedom no matter how slim.

Finally I got up, hunched my shoulders and walked out into the rain, leaving behind me the fetid odor of sick, unwashed bodies and dung.

The exercise yard was empty and I crossed it, keeping to the shadows as much as possible, toward the gate designated in the note. I scarcely knew what to expect as Gate 3 loomed up before me through the rain and mist, dimly illuminated by a floodlight. On the outside a solitary French guard stood huddled in his raincape.

I looked once more at my watch. It was eight, exactly. I sidled closer to the gate—and then noticed that it was ajar, the guard's back turned. Without hesitation I slipped through. The guard did not move.

Once outside, I felt an almost uncontrollable impulse to run. But I stifled it, turned left and walked slowly, my whole body rigid with effort, along the path toward the woods. I expected the shrill of the guard's whistle at any moment. But it did not come.

Soon I was within the gloom of the wood. Through it, I knew from the prisoners' talk, went the path in a roundabout way to the village. I quickened my pace to a stumbling run. I was out—free! I wanted to wave my arms and shout. Free! Free!

But I was not free—yet.

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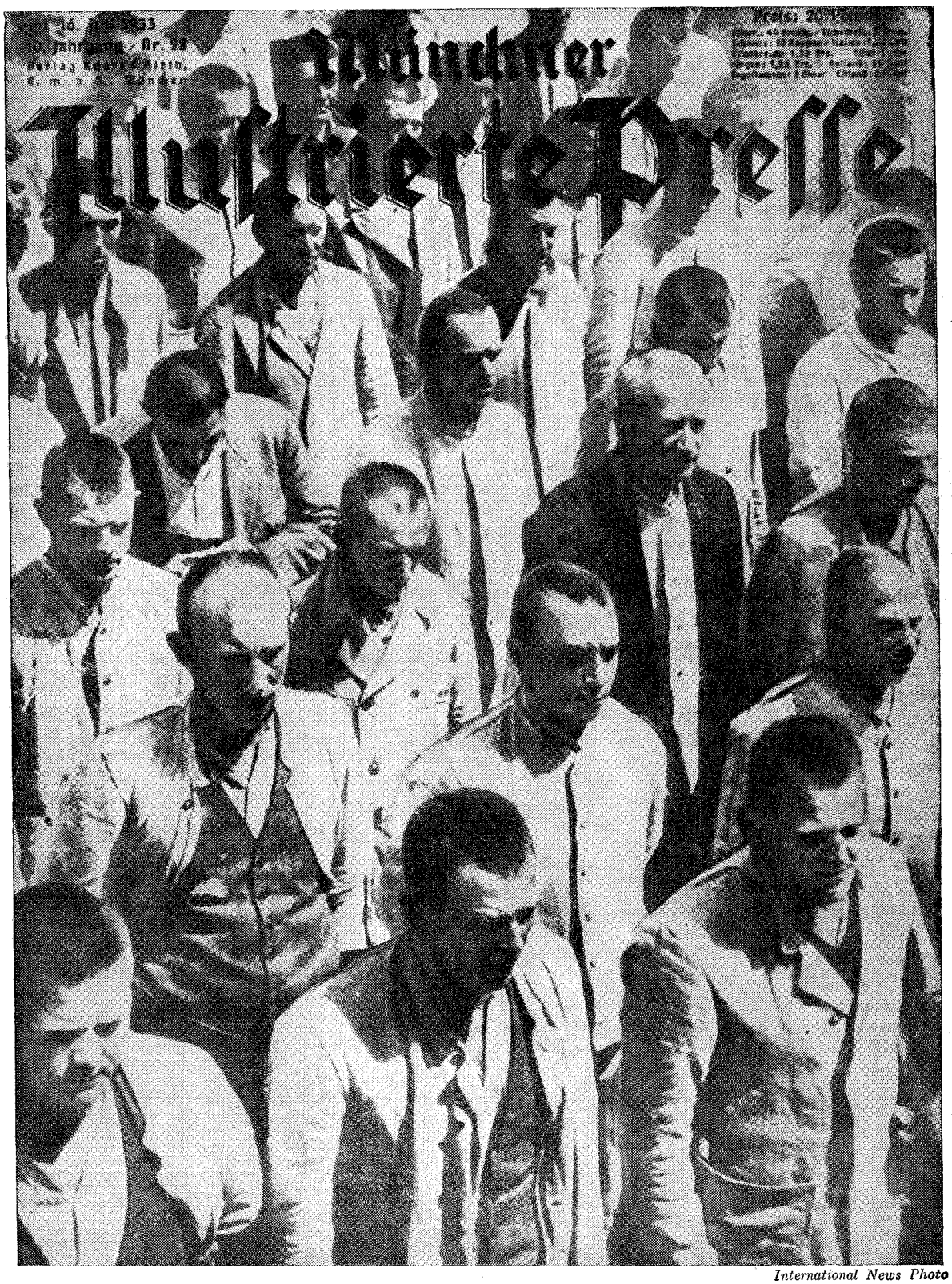
As I felt my way around a bend in the path I became abruptly aware of a shadow darker than the rest moving toward me. Before I could spring for the shelter of the trees a flashlight beam lanced out and came to a focus blindingly upon my face.

"Halt!" a guttural voice said thickly. I stood rock-still, my heart pumping suffocatingly in my throat, as the baleful eye came nearer.

"*Ach,* it iss the hungry pig-dog." The words had a tendency to slur themselves together and I was aware of the reek of alcohol. "I will give you a bellyful of lead this time, swine." I could hear the faint rustle as the Brown Coat fumbled for his revolver.

Without thinking I leaped straight at the light. My shoulder struck something soft and yielding; there was a surprised "*oof,*" the light went out and we were rolling together on the ground.

Fat fingers pawed for a grip on my throat. Desperately my one good hand, groping in the mud, closed on a jagged rock. I raised it and struck at the pale blur before me



International News Photo

These are my people: terrorized, discouraged, beaten. And the Nazis boast of it!

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that was a face. Through a red mist I struck savagely again and again until the heavy body beneath me relaxed. Then I climbed to my feet and stood trembling, gulping the damp air in great shuddering gasps.

IT TOOK me an hour to find the rue Flauberg once I reached the village. Twice I almost ran into Nazi patrols. Number 14 had a dark, almost deserted look; nevertheless I crept around to the back door and knocked timidly.

It opened immediately but no light showed from within.

"Who is there?" a woman's voice asked in French.

"Jon Hendel," I said.

"Come in quickly, Jon Hendel."

I entered, the door was shut and bolted and a hand guided me across the room. I could hear another door being opened. "This is the one we're expecting," the woman's voice said. I was thrust through the door closed behind me.

A tiny flashlight winked on. In the reflected light I was aware there were two men beside me in the room, although I could not see their faces.

"*Grand dieu!* What happened? Are you hurt?" a gentle voice exclaimed.

Looking down, I saw that there was blood on my hands.

"I ran into a Brown Shirt on the path," I said. "I—I think I killed him."

"You left him there?" the voice asked in alarm.

"No. I dragged him into the underbrush and hid him as best I could."

"*Bien.* Wash yourself and get into these."

I did as I was told without question. What else? When I had washed and dressed in the peasant's smock, baggy pants and jabots, they gave me a dilapidated broad-brimmed hat, applied a few smears of dirt expertly to my face.

"Is—is this the underground railway they are talking about at the camp?" I asked as they handed me a *carte d'identité* made out in a strange name.

"They are talking about it, eh? That is not good." The voice hesitated. "We are friends. Let that suffice. The cart will be here soon to take you to your next stop."

"Well, whoever you are," I said, "I shall be grateful to you always."

"Let it pass."

The door creaked and the woman's voice said, "The cart is outside. Come."

A two-wheeled peasant's wagon heaped high with turnips stood at the curb. I climbed up beside the driver and they rattled away into the night.

At dawn the cart dropped me at a farmhouse on the outskirts of Paris where I lay concealed in the haymow for a day and a night. Then, provided with a new set of identity papers, a change of clothing, tortoise-shell glasses, a briefcase full of legal papers and a road map, I set out on a bicycle on the next lap of the journey to freedom.

Nazi sentries stopped me at several control points, but my papers passed inspection; and at dusk I reached a small industrial city just inside occupied territory.

For three days I hid in the cellar of an empty warehouse. The watchman brought me food but would say nothing concerning my next step.

ON THE afternoon of the fourth day the watchman sewed a mourning band to my sleeve, fixed another on my hat and took me to a church from which a funeral procession was about to start. As room was being made for me in a carriage, the watchman whispered: "Follow the *gamin* with flowers in his hand!" and walked rapidly away.

At the entrance to the cemetery, which I learned later was across the line in the unoccupied zone, Nazi border guards gave the procession a cursory glance and waved it forward.

I took my place with the other mourners at the grave. Although I kept a sharp—but cautious—watch, I was not aware of the small boy grasping the wilted bunch of flowers until he suddenly appeared beside me.

"Here I am, *mon père,*" the *gamin* said with a sly wink, and took hold of my hand with a grimy fist.

When the ceremony ended, instead of returning to the carriages we wandered away in the opposite direction; paused to lay the flowers on a grave until the procession had gone, then left the cemetery by another entrance.

"You are now in Unoccupied France," the boy said with a grin. "How does it feel?"

"Wonderful!" I said, breathing deeply.

"*Eh bien.* You must not stand here. You are not safe yet. Follow me."

From then on it was easier, and progress along the underground more rapid. Sometimes it was a peasant whose broad patois I could scarcely understand who helped me on, sometimes a priest. Once I rode in a Red Cross ambulance with a driver who whistled American swing tunes but refused to talk.

At a seaport town I was provided with a forged passport, hidden in a smuggler's sloop disguised as a fisherman, and landed one stormy night on the Portuguese coast. From there I made my way on foot to Lisbon, to wait with other refugees for passage to almost the only land left where freedom is not a mockery.

I am now in America.

Of course, Jon Hendel is not my real name. My brother and his wife are somewhere in France, if they are still alive; they would suffer if I were identified. But there are many others like me: liberals, outspoken opponents of Nazism—Jews. My story is that of the few who were fortunate.

ON OCTOBER fifth of last year a small slight man with a sensitive face still showing the ravages of a concentration camp walked down the gangplank of the *Excalibur* in Jersey City to end a strikingly similar saga of escape to freedom.

He was Lion Feuchtwanger, 56-year-old German-Jewish author of *Power, Josephus* and other novels, who had the honor of having his books burned by the Nazis as a menace to the spread of their ideology. He also had the distinction of being one of the top men on the Gestapo's death list.

With extreme reticence he revealed to reporters the highlights of his own fantastic and daring dash across Europe to safety in the United States, telling his story slowly and carefully lest he drop the slightest hint as to the identity of those who aided him in his flight from the Nazi terror.

The story of his underground odyssey to the West actually began when he was placed in a French concentration camp at Les Milles not far from Aix at the outbreak of the war. This struck Feuchtwanger as a strangely ironic precaution, especially since it came at the very time when British planes were scattering propaganda pamphlets containing quotations from his anti-Nazi writings over German cities.

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It must have struck French officialdom as slightly senseless too, for after a few days he was released. But when the Nazis invaded the Low Countries he was once more returned to Les Milles.

Sanitary conditions were frightful in the unbelievably overcrowded camp. There were no toilets. Dysentery was all too prevalent.

When the German advance penetrated to within sixty-five miles of Les Milles, his fellow prisoners, some of whom, like Feuchtwanger, had prices on their heads, delegated the novelist to beg the commandant to move them or else release them to find safety as they could.

After a heartbreaking period of vacilation 2,600 prisoners were herded into tiny French freight cars, sixty men to a car. The heat was stifling. They were so crowded they could not lie down. But no one complained as for five nightmare days and nights they managed to keep just a few hours ahead of the German steamroller.

They arrived at Bayonne only to find the ship which was to take them to Africa for safe keeping had already sailed. Again Feuchtwanger pleaded with officials to get them away. With the Nazis only an hour behind, the train pulled slowly back along the Pyrenees. At one point the engineer stopped in the middle of a tunnel to hide while a column of motorized skirmishers passed overhead.

At last they reached Nimes and were placed in Camp St. Nicholas. Their situation had not been much improved, however; for although Nimes lay in the unoccupied zone, according to the terms of the armistice the French agreed to turn over to the Gestapo specified enemies of Germany on demand.

Now they faced delivery to the Nazis at any moment, and a firing squad—or worse.

THE acute shortage of water added another bodily discomfort to their mental agony. Water used by the prisoners had to be brought in by truck, and each was limited to a quart a day for drinking and all other purposes. Once a week they were marched to a river three miles away and allowed to bathe.

But it was this water shortage that played an important part in enabling the underground to aid Feuchtwanger.

The day a Nazi agent appeared at the camp with a list of men wanted by the Gestapo, the novelist had been assigned to a bathing party. In it were two hundred prisoners, with only one guard.

Somewhere near the river a car drove slowly past. A "friend," according to the novelist, was at the wheel. He opened the door and Feuchtwanger sprang in, disguising himself in a woman's cloak and hat as the car roared away.

At a town which he was careful not to name, other "friends" hid him in a cellar for six weeks. Mrs. Feuchtwanger joined him there and they waited while passports under false names were secured and provided with Spanish and Portuguese visas.

When the necessary arrangements had been made, the Feuchtwangers, carefully disguised, slipped out of the house at midnight and boarded a train for the Spanish frontier.

Exit visas from France were impossible to obtain but other "friends" met them there and escorted them to a pass through the Pyrenees fancied by smugglers. This time the fugitives started at noon, for the pass was not so closely guarded then as at night, and trudged the six miles through the mountains to a Spanish village where still other "friends" had a car waiting.

Spain, like France, literally swarmed with Gestapo agents and the trip by train to Barcelona and Madrid was beset with danger. Several times they were stopped and their papers examined, but each time they were allowed to proceed. It took a week before they finally crossed the Portuguese border and reached Lisbon in safety.

Once there the novelist cautiously identified himself to an American consular official and secured passage for the United States.

A LITTLE over a week after the *Excalibur* docked in Jersey City, fifteen other anti-Nazi literary fugitives from the Gestapo arrived in Hoboken, brought to safety by the Greek liner *Nea Hellas*, also out of Lisbon. Among them were Franz Werfel, author of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh;* Heinrich and Gottfried Mann, brother and son of Thomas Mann, novelist and winner of the Nobel prize for literature.

Following shortly came Konrad Heiden, anti-Nazi, political writer, author of an excellent biography of Hitler, and for seven years a fugitive from the Gestapo. Heiden had made three hundred miles of his way on foot from a concentration camp at Tours.

But not all who sought to escape the wrath of the Nazis were as successful as they were—as I was. A few days after their arrival in the safety of the United States, a dispatch from Marseille reported the interception by French coastal patrol boats of two yachts that had almost slipped out of French waters with one hundred and seventy-two refugees aboard.

It looks as if the Gestapo legions are beginning to plug the leaks. With time they will be even better organized to scour the country and it will become increasingly difficult and dangerous for the underground and its modern Scarlet Pimpernels to provide the smooth and efficient mechanics of escape for those unfortunates whose lives are already forfeit to Nazi hate.

But as for me—I am lucky; that is all. How good, how good to be in America!

Pepsi-Cola is made only by Pepsi-Cola Company, Long Island City, N. Y. Bottled locally by authorized bottlers.

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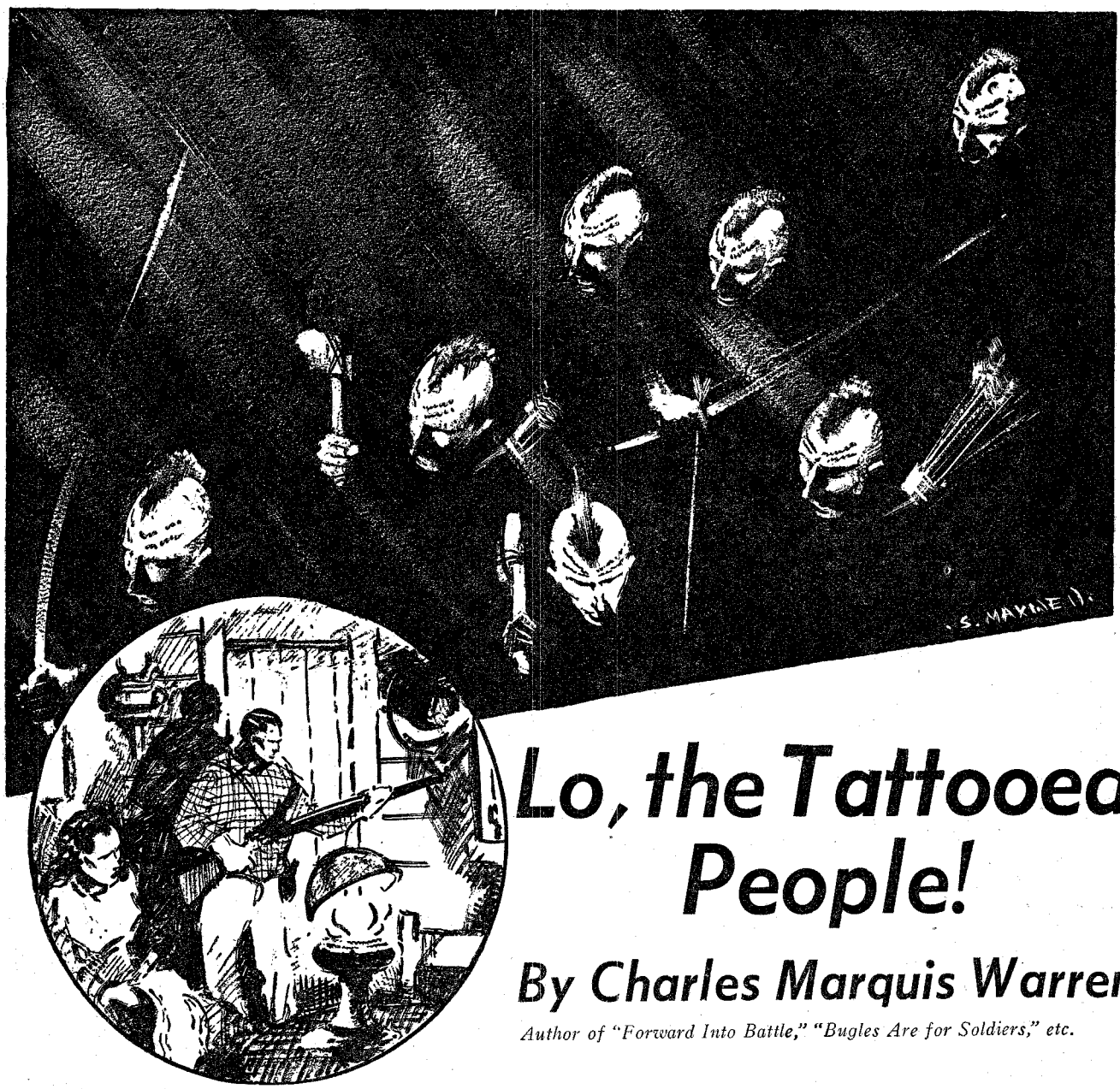

Lo, the Tattooed People!

By Charles Marquis Warren

Author of "Forward Into Battle," "Bugles Are for Soldiers," etc.

A man can know Indians, and beat 'em on their own terms. But a woman, without even a leg to stand on, can find a new way to skin you every blessed time

Lo, the Tattooed People!
Threnodous wind that blows
Across the moonlit mesa
They come . . . Arapahoes!
Frontier Ballads

IT WAS during that moment when the sun hesitated before dropping behind the prairie rim that Will Crockett laid aside his plow, slung his muzzle-loading Spencer across his back, unhitched his mules and started walking before them toward his cabin. It wasn't hot, but his hand when he drew it across his brow came away shiny.

He made no effort to hurry. Cathy would have a right elegant meal waiting for him but he wasn't hankering for it and her like a man married less than two months had ought to hanker.

The cabin was a quarter of a mile distant, beyond the prairie cap rock ahead. When he reached the cap he looked down and saw it, nestling where he and Sud had built it two years before, fifty or sixty paces from the plum thicket.

It occurred to him that here lately he was always a mite surprised to find it in the same place they had built it. It was just that Cathy hadn't got around to moving the cabin site, he reckoned; if the thought came on her the cabin wouldn't rest there long.

He found himself involuntarily slowing his pace so that the muzzles of the mules reached past his shoulders on either side. Maybe it was seeing the faint smoke rising from the cabin chimney. A fresh-married man had ought to get a wallop out of that smoke and what it meant. Lye hominy and cracklin' bread steaming on the table waiting for him; and Cathy waiting for him too.

It was enough to turn the saliva sweet in a man's mouth, supper like that and a young wife with lips that weren't too hard and a woman's body under her calico for all her eighteen years.

But Will Crockett, whose sun- and wind-whipped face looked a spell older than his twenty-four years, didn't entertain any pleasant anticipations, neither for food nor wife.

As he ambled he glanced toward the pecan grove where there'd be prime hen turkeys nesting; and farther along, in the willow brakes, he wouldn't have any trouble flushing an antelope if he'd the mind for it.

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But Cathy had stated her hankering for lye hominy and cracklin' bread tonight and so there wasn't much use in thinking how a venison steak or a fat hen turkey with her own juice for gravy would taste. Cathy could raise more than her usual tarnation whenever he had the mood to venture an opposition.

And she knew what was best for him. She'd vowed back in Kentucky she could make a new man of him. And she had. It had taken her less than two months. Only Will wasn't rightly sure how this newness sat him.

That was why sweat formed on his brow and a puzzled reluctance slowed his steps whenever he finished his daily trick of plowing or hunting and headed toward the cabin. He'd always held it in mind a man teamed up with a woman for the happiness she brought him and the security he provided her. Up until Cathy had patiently shown him where he was wrong, he'd thought it a fair to middling idea.

Six weeks ago, when he brought her out from Kentucky, Sud had come running from the cabin, hooting, and taken a long look at her and said, "You raked in the pot, Will; burn it. There won't be no stakes like her in the second deal." And he looked pleased and a mite envious and rueful.

Since then Cathy had taken them in hand and gentled them out of their notions. Men folk wore their leggings till they teamed up, she explained; then they'd got to be unnotioned about wearing them the rest of their days. She made a joke about it. She said the leggings had got to be washed and changed by a woman else they'd give a man the itch. And she laughed her bright nice-sounding laugh.

She hadn't noways been cantankerous about it. Very sensical and very peaceable—except if Will ruffled her some by expressing a puzzled chariness as to whether she wasn't drawing the bow a mite too long.

It was this chariness that had furrowed the small lines of disappointment between Will's eyes in the last month. He couldn't rightfully figure she was wrong, that he'd teamed up with a wrong 'un. And he had her word that she was right.

He reminded himself of this as he walked and made a stab at quickening his pace toward home and Cathy.

WHEN he was within three hundred paces of the cabin he stopped short, his jaw dropping. From around the cabin's far side the Conestoga ambled, its double team pointing their noses toward him. Under its hoop-tilted front bow he could see Sud, long rifle jutting above his hunched shoulders.

Will made no move. He waited till the wagon halted beside him and Sud's youngish good-natured face looked solemnly down at his.

"Ain't you got your direction contrary, Sud?" he asked hopefully. "Silvertown's back thataway." He gestured past the wagon's rear, toward the east.

But his gesture, like his tone, was without conviction. Whenever he or Sud traversed the sixty miles to town for supplies or hell-raising they used the pack mules; and he could tell from the bulges in the Conestoga's tilt that it was fully loaded.

Sud didn't look at him.

"No. Allowed I'd mosey westward a bit. Got the itch, Will."

"That ain't it."

Sud scratched his cheek.

"Well, no, it ain't."

"You wouldn't pull stakes without me. You lost the itch two years ago when we built the cabin."

"I just thought I did."

Sud swallowed and scuffed at the floorboards with his moccasins. They had been friends a long time and Will shared this embarrassment that had risen between them.

He said slowly, "It's account of Cathy, ain't it?"

"Well. . . . She's been wantin' me to hie out since you brung her. And she's right. It ain't noways fittin' for me to clutter up a fresh-married team's cabin."

"We built it together. It's half yours."

"She allows as how you was on the site a week before I come."

"She knows you was bringing out gear from Silvertown. I told her often enough, Sud."

"But she's right. You was here first. Right of possession, she says." Sud looked over the prairie rim, his lids half closed, a strong shame in his voice. "I feel ornery leaving you, what with the rains havin' filled the water holes and a full moon out since last night."

Impulsively Will glanced about him. Water and bright nights were what Arapahoes waited for.

He said quickly. "There ain't been any signs since they got licked by the soldiers down at Wingate six months ago."

"That's the worst sign."

"The cabin's solid, Sud. We built it so's we could hold the whole Arapahoe nation outside if occasion warranted. It ain't your rifle I'll miss."

HE REPEATED that to himself long after Sud and the Conestoga had disappeared over the cap onto the prairie. He and Sud had spent some care building the cabin. They'd used hardwood logs, sodded the roof, thatched it with bear-grass, puncheoned the floor and assembled the furniture carefully by hand. You didn't put that much labor into something you didn't intend to be permanent.

They got along right fair. Their ways didn't interfere with one another. They'd made the cabin extra large against the day when they took wives. And Will had dared first to go back to Kentucky and brought his woman out and here Sud had hauled tail, with no place much to go, and not much reason for going. Except Cathy.

He tethered the mules in the pole shack behind the cabin and washed his hands and face in the tub of water from the nearby creek before he went in for supper.

There was nobody there. He stood for a moment, the tidiness of the place coming at his nostrils the way the strong smell of lye soap did. There was no sweet odor of cracklin' bread. The single kettle hanging on the fireplace crane contained hominy; he could hear the smothered popping. With Sud's things gone an empty orderliness possessed the room.

Suddenly he was out of the door and running toward the creek, holding his rifle in both hands like a charging infantryman. A tight unreasonable fear bounced inside his ribs.

"Cathy!"

He found her a hundred yards up the creek, pole and line in hand and a string of bass and catfish beside her. She looked up, smiling, the lavender of the sunset catching her dark eyes and hair and softening them.

"Cathy, I told you enough never to come this far from the cabin savin' Sud or me was along. An' here I find you with nobody even in the cabin . . ."

She must not have liked his tone because the smile disappeared from her lips and her eyes took on that flash he had become as familiar with as he was with the flash of summer lightning before a storm.

"Don't you dast say I sent Sud away, Will Crockett. I didn't have one thing to do with it. He thought it up himself. I told him enough the cabin site was ours by right of first possession and he agreed, but I didn't ever ask him out. Figuring he could do better with a patch of his own was his idea."

"I didn't say nothing about you sending Sud away. I said I don't want to find you out here by yourself."

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She got up from her crouch with the lithe quick movement of her body he liked to see.

"You've got no call to scold me like that. You and your Indians. There hasn't been a sign of an Indian since the soldiers ran them off last November. You're fussed because I wasn't waiting for you in the house."

"No, I ain't."

"Besides, you were late."

"Not much."

"A body can't sit with her hands in her lap waiting for a man to make up his mind how late he'll be for supper."

There she was again. Getting the jump on him. Turning his concern into a harried defence. He couldn't figure her. Back in Kentucky she'd vowed a woman had to show her gumption with a frontier "savage" for a husband or he'd turn her into a squaw in no time. But then she'd smiled and said it softly and it was kind of fetching.

Looking at her now he figured she was lucky without knowing it. A self-respecting Arapahoe would have taken an orangewood bow to her in less time than she'd have to think.

But he also allowed she knew best how to handle a team in marriage. Women were brought up for that. He couldn't in no way keep the cabin scrubbed tidy like her or mend his linsey shirts and leggings like her or serve up cooking like her. And besides all that, she was so durned good to look at.

HE LOOKED at her and offered humbly, "I wasn't late except I was tryin' to start that extra twenty to corn you wanted."

"You weren't keen on hurrying it."

He and Sud had always found forty acres ample for their own needs as well as furnishing a small surplus which brought cash money for supplies. But Cathy had suggested the added twenty and he'd been pleased to accommodate her. Now he was catching it because of her own idea. These lookers, he reflected, were hard on a man no matter were they worth it.

She didn't appear mollified. She inclined her head toward the string of cat and bass.

"Bring them along, Will. We're having them for supper."

"But you said—"

Her bright laugh chided him.

"Yes, cracklin' bread. But I thought I'd spoil you giving you Sunday's dish on Thursday."

He picked up the fish and followed her, watching the way her dark head seemed to toss in time with the motion of her lips as she walked. Then he pulled his eyes away and let them glance penetratingly about. The red-lavender of sunset was darkening. He didn't know why he felt funny. He scrutinized the plum thicket, pecan grove and the bluff of the cap rock leading onto the prairie with an intensity that made him feel uncomfortable.

For some reason he remembered Sud's observation that there were two things you could smell before you could see: thunder storms and Arapahoes.

In the cabin he went about the business of inspecting the trap boards that could be let down over the windows and secured from the inside. As long as there was any light at all outside he kept going to the door and peering out; and once he circled the cabin and looked in at the mules in the shack and when he came back Cathy had the supper on the table.

He ate the lye hominy hungrily but couldn't do any more than mess about with the fish. He didn't like anything about fish but the catching. And Cathy knew it.

There against the black night one of the Arapahoes had her around the throat

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"You're not eating the fish," she said.

"I ain't crazy about fish. You told me we was having cracklin' bread. I worked up a craving."

She smiled at him, making a nose. She had a pretty way with her.

"It's brain food, Will."

"For them who like it."

She kept on smiling.

"You're just fussed because I changed my mind about the bread."

"I reckon a little."

"You eat the fish."

"I had enough."

"It's good for you. It'll take away that itch you have to convince me you're the man in this family. Something I know already." She wrinkled her nose at him again, pleasantly.

To keep her from getting fussed he ate a part of one fish. Then all at once he got up, took his rifle from the wall and threw open the door. He stood there nearly a minute before he realized he was doing a damned fool thing. He stepped to one side of the door quickly and said:

"Put that lamp out."

"What's the matter with you, Will?"

"You hear what I said? Put that lamp out."

Without looking he knew her lips were pursing, her eyes beginning to flash. Her tone was petulant.

"You got no call to speak in that voice to me, Will Crockett. You can put it out yourself."

He took three steps to the table and put out the lamp. He did it viciously. As he returned to the door he heard her surprised intake of breath.

HE MOVED quietly around the cabin to the shack and watched the mules until he was nearly certain the slight noises he had heard had only been the cursory stomp of hoofs and rattle of halter ropes along the feedbox. He could have sworn that both the critters had buckled when he'd sat at the table.

When he entered the cabin she had the lamp on and was clearing off the table. He could tell by the stiff arch of her back that she was furious. His own anger was mitigated a bit by thought of the fact (which she reminded him of often enough) that he wouldn't gain much taking advantage of the prairie's solitude and her defenselessness to prove he was wearing the leggings.

Leaning the Spencer against the wall he had walked over to the corner of the room by the fireplace before he realized the pack-box he was looking for wasn't there. It gave him a start, the way it will when a thing isn't where you're used to finding it.

He looked in their bedroom in the loft but couldn't find the box. He looked under Sud's stripped bunk in the kitchen and it wasn't there. Then he walked over to Cathy who was bent over the noggin tub scrubbing the dishes.

"What did you do with my pack-box, Cathy?"

For a moment he thought she was going to carry her fussedness on and not speak to him. He was letting the slow beat of anger in his chest flush up to his throat when she said:

"It wasn't yours. It was Sud's."

"Had his pelts in it, but it was mine."

She turned around, brushing back loose strands of dark hair.

"I made him take it along. He'd kept that rank-smelling bale of skins in it so long I'd never get it clean. I could taste the smell in the food I cooked."

He couldn't say anything. He tried to stare her down. He could tell from the hot defiance in her eyes that she hadn't had any malice aforethought in doing what she'd done.

There wasn't much he could do now. As he got to the doorway her voice stopped him.

"You needn't act so all-fired mysterious. You're letting on like there was Indians about."

HE DIDN'T answer. He didn't even turn around. He stood where he was, as if waiting for her voice to release him. Her next words, arrogant with female contempt, cut at the back of his neck.

"You're stooping mighty low. Letting on about Indians and thinking it will put fear into me and I'll come crawling like a squaw. When you're fussed, you're ornery, Will Crockett. But you got a lot to learn about managing females. Women ain't animals and it's time you found it out."

He turned slowly. He could feel the redness of his own face. It was that hot. He stared at her. She caught her breath in a little sharp sound and took a quick step backward.

"Don't you look at me like that, Will."

"I was thinkin'."

"You want to beat me, don't you? Well, you can. Like I was a squaw. I couldn't stop you. I couldn't run home. But I'd hate you if you did. I'd despise you."

"I was thinkin' that you never seen an Arapahoe, have you? You seen some friendly Navahos, some Cochiti Pueblos, maybe, sellin' trinkets at the post."

"You're not scaring me. You hear?"

"But you never seen an Arapahoe, in spring, with paint on."

"I've seen squaws. Some that was red married to white men. And some that was white married to white men. They wanted to feel the hem of my skirts. I wouldn't let them within ten feet of me.

"Their husbands hadn't ever let them know what cambric muslin was. They were filthy dirty and walked behind their men with their heads bent. The only work their husbands did was raise a stick to lick them if they didn't jump when they were looked at.

"Now you're letting on about Indians, trying to scare me into being like them, trying to get out of working like a Christian white when I ask you to put in an extra twenty to corn so's we can get ahead a little and live decent."

Her breathing was quick and defiant. Her chin tilted when she saw he wasn't going to reply.

"I won't have it. I'm your wife for better, not for worse. I'll fetch your respect if you kill me while I'm doing it."

"You got my respect, Cathy," he said quietly. "I was only thinkin' the moon's full and there's plenty water in the holes all over the prairie. It makes for easy ridin' at night. Like I said, you never seen an Arapahoe.

"Arapahoe's Indian for Tattooed People. They're ugly. I brushed here and there with Apaches and Sioux and I'd call them kind of warlike fellas; but the Tattooed People I'd call downright nasty crool. Nasty crool. It's somethin' to think about when you're through thinkin' I'm tryin' to let fear into you."

He left the kitchen without waiting for her answer.

THEY sat around some after dinner, each wanting to go to bed and afraid the other would think it showed a peace-making urge if they mentioned it first.

He watched her sewing; she was handy with a needle and the lamp lit her face and accentuated both her youth and her good looks. Twice he got up, took his rifle and stood with his ear to the barred door, listening.

The second time, when he'd sat down, she nodded to the Spencer leaning against the wall, saying, "Even if there was Indians what help would that relic be against more than one?"

He made no answer. It was an old argument and the only one he could think of she hadn't had her way in. He liked

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the single shot muzzle-loader; it had an aim to beat hell and neat balance and he was used to it.

He didn't hold with the new breech guns the troops were trying out. He'd often boasted (and on several occasions carried out his boasts) that he could service and fire the Spencer faster and more accurately than the troopers could work their levered carbines.

"You'd better go to bed," he said at last.

"I don't recall mentioning I was tired."

"If I got to get that extra twenty done tomorrow it means breakfast early."

"You can go to bed yourself. I'm going to give the hominy leftovers to Timmy."

"No you ain't!"

He was himself startled at the harshness of his words. She was looking at him, her eyes bright.

"You going to forbid me that?"

"I ain't forbiddin' you, Cathy. I'll do it myself." He felt downright ornery, squashing at her like this. Timmy was a gopher she'd tamed and kept out in the shack and it was her habit to feed the little beast each night after supper. But he couldn't let her walk out there tonight. He wouldn't walk out there tonight himself. Maybe he was being a tarnationed fool but that's how it was and he felt it.

"You don't need to do it," she said docilely. He should have been warned by the compliance in her tone but he didn't see what she could do if he kept sitting there.

After that they said nothing. There was never much to talk about during the evenings when he calculated married folk talked their pleasantest. Each one sat waiting, rigid and silent, so that the other wouldn't get a jump. And tonight there was the wall that Sud's absence had erected between them. That and something else—something nameless and uneasy in the night outside.

The first inkling he had that he'd been drowsing was the cool touch of the night air coming through the open door.

Cathy no longer sat opposite him.

He had the Spencer in his hand and was leaping toward the door in one motion, but already he was too late and he knew it before he heard Cathy's voice suddenly split the night in high terror as it screamed his name.

THE moon put a silver face on the night. Objects were darkly distinct. Rounding the corner of the cabin he saw Cathy seeming to dance in front of the pole shack. She still held the pail in which she'd carried the hominy slops out to Timmy. Now the pail went spinning from her hand, describing a silver-glinting arch as it turned over in the moonlight.

He ran forward quietly, bent over, head up, and not offering her a reassuring call. The less noise you made, the less conspicuous you were.

She screamed again. It started high and trembly and descended to a gurgling moan. He hardly recognized his name in the scream. It was that unnatural.

Not until he was almost upon her did he see that she wasn't performing a weird dance by herself. A tall dark thing stood behind her and the whiteness of her throat was obscured by an arm encircling it. Her head was pulled back as if she was being jerked by the hair.

There wasn't any use calling to her to step aside. He kept on going and when he got up to her he drove his fist into her stomach and that doubled her up as nothing else would, and left the dark thing rising above her.

He fired at the bright-showing paint, knowing it covered a face, and saw the dark thing move backward and fade from his line of vision.

She lay on the ground, her body shaking, and he had a time of it getting her to her feet. He hustled her along the cabin's side and had nearly got her to the door when he heard the whooping.

He could see them coming out of the plum thicket, racing, bent low, dark shadows close to the ground, like coyotes. Four or five of them, he made out. The one who'd caught up with Cathy had been sent ahead to get the feel of things; and now that they knew how it was—one man and a woman in the cabin—they were coming full tilt.

Cathy chose that moment to stumble and lean heavily against him and he knew the open door might as well have been a hundred miles away. The bounding figures would overtake them three long steps before they reached the door.

He turned his head, lifting it, and uttered the Sioux war-cry with the strength that remained in his lungs. It came out piercing and sudden, and for a moment the figures out there slowed down. But only for a moment. It didn't take them more than a second to reason that Sioux didn't get down this way at this time of season. They came on, doubling their pace to make up for that hesitation.

But the whoop had had an unexpected effect. Issuing an inch from Cathy's ear it flung her forward as if she had been shot from a rifle barrel. She reached the door in one leap and stumbled through safely.

Will, freed of the burden of her, had time to lurch into the cabin; he swung the door shut and barred it, just as the foremost pursuer crashed against its stout wood with a jar that brought a sickening sound as half of the upper H hinge loosened from the frame.

He glanced up at it, catching his breath and inwardly cursing himself for having waited for Sud to get around to mending the faulty hinge. It wouldn't hold out against many more of the smashings the door had received; and evidently those on the outside were aware of it too, for they renewed their vigorous battering.

HE TILTED his powder flask against the Spencer's muzzle, rammed home wad and ball, tamping them expertly while the door shook under another impact and fell forward at the top a little as the hinge weakened.

He threw the weight of his left shoulder against the upper panel and said:

"Put out the lamp."

There was no answer and the lamp remained lit. He turned his head. Outside he made out the scuffle of moccasined feet as they drew off for another onslaught.

"Damn it, girl, put out that lamp!"

He twisted his head and looked at her. She was staring at him. He could hear the sharpness of her breathing clear across the room. She was holding both hands against her stomach where he had hit her.

"You let me go out there alone!" Her voice was as sharp as her breathing. It was high and accusing. "You wanted me killed!"

"Shut up and put out that lamp. You hear?"

His shoulder seemed to jar into his collar bone as the door jumped forward at him. He turned his back full on the panel, planted his feet before him and shoved backward. The door closed tight with a *whooshing* sound; but the sudden release of pressure on the hinge loosened it entirely and the peg nails fell out.

Cathy's wide eyes still watched him. Then she seemed to remember why her hands pressed at her stomach.

"When you did come you hit me. You hate me. You're ashamed you married me and couldn't break me like you break a mare. You want to be rid of me."

She didn't cry. Her eyes were dry and brilliant. And wider than he'd ever seen them.

"Put out that lamp."

For a moment she stood still, unable to comply. Then the tone of his voice seemed to jolt her to life and her hand reached toward the lamp, fumbled with it, and the room was in darkness.

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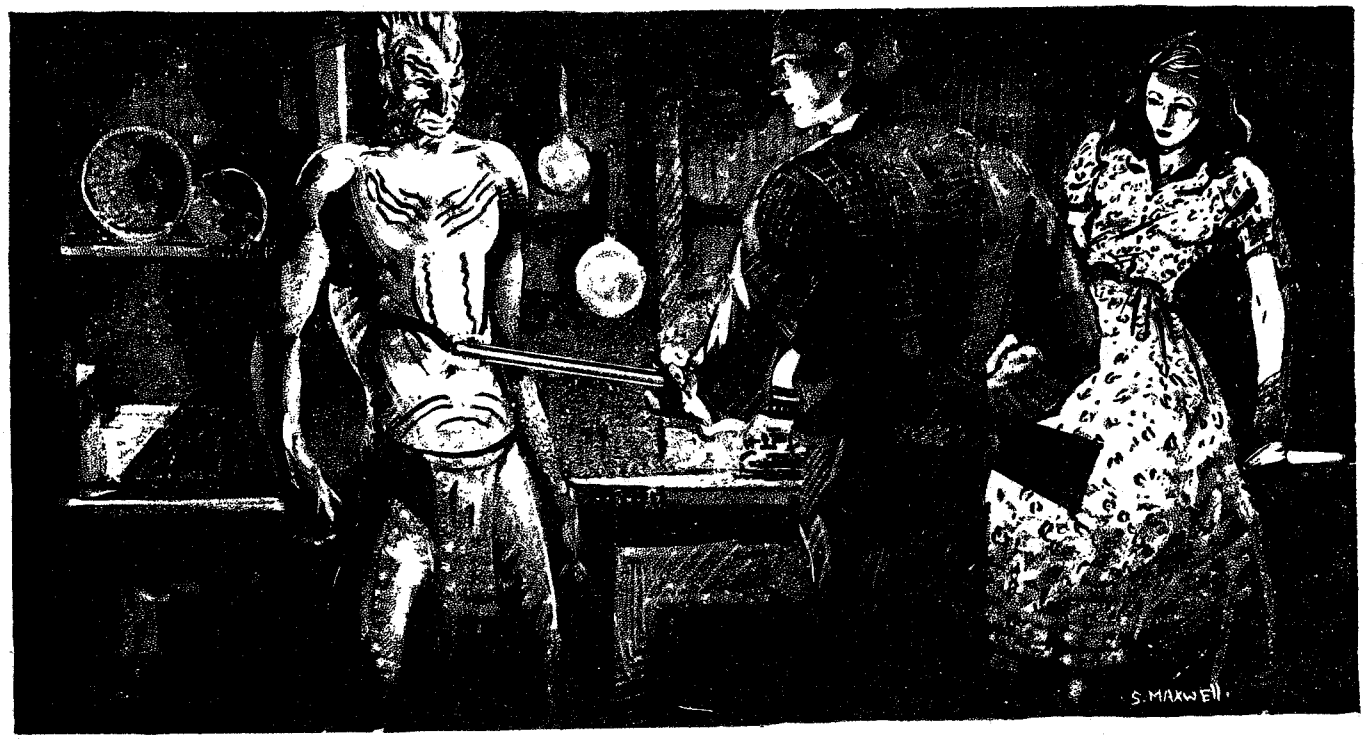

Will began to speak, without relaxing the pressure of his gun against the Indian's belly. This was the head man. . .

Immediately he turned and drew out the hardwood bung that plugged the loophole in the door and pressed his eye to the hole.

He saw them more distinctly with his nose than with his eyes. Their odor was beasty sweet with dry grease. They were rushing toward the door again.

He straightened and thrust the muzzle of the Spencer through the loophole and fired. There was no answering sound. He withdrew the rifle and plugged the loophole. Then he heard the soft scrape of moccasins beating away from the door, a good deal away. Also he heard a jerky, bubbly breathing outside at the base of the door.

Adjusting the door, he moved in the darknes to the table and lit the lamp.

"Won't harm nothing long as there ain't no chink for them to see in through," he explained. Then he noticed that Cathy hadn't moved. She stood rigid. Only now her hands had dropped to her sides. She did not take her eyes from him.

He swallowed hard.

"They haven't gone," he said. "They ain't even started thinking about going."

He went into the kitchen, got hammer and peg nails and returned. Cathy hadn't moved. She turned a little so that she could watch him. He drew a chair to the door, stood on it and did a makeshift job on the hinge that wasn't much but was better than nothing.

"You better set down."

She sat down. She sat by the table and watched him.

He listened at the door. The bubbly breathing had stopped. Then he sat on the chair by the door, the Spencer across his knees.

THERE was no talk between them. Once he sought to comfort her by explaining they need have no fear of the cabin being set on fire; with only two defenders the Indians wouldn't risk destroying the contents of the cabin by burning it. She made no answer and he knew she had not heard. Her eyes, on him, seemed glazed and at the same time fiery.

He wished she could get around to crying, the way a woman did.

The night dragged along like it was walking on weighted feet. He understood Arapahoes; and he knew how pitch dark it got before dawn. Gradually the crickets in the thicket shut up and the drumming of the bullfrogs down by the creek quieted and then ceased altogether.

He got up stiffly and removed the plug from the loophole. Somebody might have been holding a black rug over the outside of the hole, it was that dark.

As if his rising had been a signal, whooping started in

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the thicket. It was eerie and curdled even Will's blood and it grew louder as they raced nearer.

"This here's it," he said. "When they whoop it means they ain't going to take no for an answer."

She looked up at him, her eyes growing even wider than they had been. He thought maybe the skin at their corners was going to split. Dully she reached a hand to the lamp.

"Leave it lit," he said. Then he looked out the loophole and watched them come on, fastening his eye on the foremost, knowing what he had to do and wondering if he had the jim-jam inside him to do it.

A long shuddering breath went out of Cathy. Glancing at her he saw that she was standing and there was horror on her face if he had ever seen it.

"Will!" Her voice was barely audible. "Don't let them take us, Will!"

He turned his eye back to the hole. The scuff of moccasins sounded like thunder in his ears.

"Will!"

She was swaying. Her voice was loud and high.

"Kill them! Don't let them come nearer. . . ."

He came erect swiftly then, and slipped the door's bar from its brackets. The whooping was like high wind.

He gauged the moment neatly and flung open the door. There was a stir of night air and the sound of a heavy fall upon the cabin floor and Will swung the door closed, barred it and swung around, rifle pointing, as Cathy's screams tore through the room simultaneously with the thudding impacts of bodies flinging furiously at the door.

Something lay for a second on the floor, then bounded to its feet and looked down at the muzzle of Will's rifle against its belly.

THE Arapahoe's head was shaven clean on both sides, leaving the scalplock rising rigidly along the center like a black cockscomb. His face was painted vermillion with liverish white spots speckling his forehead, cheeks and chin. His chest was striped with alternating ocher and black and had the appearance of being covered by a thin film of skin. The long flap of his clout swung darkly between his legs.

His bow lay on the floor where he had landed after hurtling through the door; the quiver protruding from behind his shoulder rose and fell with the quick deep breathing of his chest. He held a hatchet in his right hand and this he let drop as Will spoke sharply to him in Arapahoe.

Outside the whooping had ceased. The door no longer shook. There was only silence, a silence deep with waiting.

Cathy could not move; she stood rooted, the back of her hand pressed against her mouth. She was not looking at the Arapahoe, but at Will.

Will began to speak. He did not relax the pressure of the rifle's muzzle against the Indian's belly. He tried not to let how he felt show in his tone or in the measured pace of his words. He'd got the head man of this war party, he realized, and he had to go carefully. He had an almighty hope that Cathy wouldn't start to acting up while he was talking.

The Indian listened, allowing nothing of what he thought to appear on his face. Indians, Will knew, were damned persnickety about letting their facial expressions change; they hated like tarnation to crack their paint.

He'd almost got through his speech when Cathy's stifled moan cut in on him. He saw the Arapahoe's dark eyes turn and drop, and a contempt come into them.

Cathy had sunk to her knees. Her words were as laden with fear as her huge eyes.

"Will."

"Shut up."

"What are you saying to him? Don't let him—"

"I'm making a bargain with him. Keep quiet."

"A *bargain*."

Her knees began to move and before he knew it she was at his feet, her face tilted to his.

"You're not—not bargaining *me*, are you?" He couldn't make out whether she was going to faint or scream with laughter. Her voice barely reached his ears. "I'd rather be your squaw—than his."

He kicked her away from him then. He did it softly, with his shin rather than his foot, but it rolled her away and he knew it hadn't hurt her and he was relieved at the expression of approval that came on the graven face before him.

She looked at Will. The gentleness of the kick had evidently provided a shred of hope and she grasped at it.

"You love me, Will. Kill him! We'll make out against the others somehow. Shoot him. I promise you'll never have trouble with me. I'll do anything you say; you won't even have to say it and I'll know what you want. Can't you see I want to be your—squaw, Will? Please . . ."

By jumpers, he reflected, a man couldn't beat 'em. Even in submission they gave you suggestions. The lookers with the starch in their backbones tried to skin you when they were bottom-side down and didn't have a leg to stand on.

He barked at her in Arapahoe to keep the damn-hell quiet and spoke once more to the Indian.

WHEN he was finished he looked steadfastly at the Arapahoe. There was no reply. Will waited, the anxiety in him turning hot and cold by turns. Without looking at her he knew the life had gone out of Cathy.

He didn't want to look at her. She had risen to her feet and was waiting, her head bent a little. It was as if she'd found her hole card—her surrender—wasn't high enough.

Then at last the Indian nodded and spoke agreement in his own language and put his hand on Will's left shoulder to seal the bargain. Will waited a decent interval and placed his own hand on the other's shoulder.

The Indian grunted, glancing contemptuously again at Cathy, and stepped to the door. Will retrieved the bow and hatchet and handed them to him and then unbarred and opened the door.

Outside the first tinge of light brought objects into gray relief and he saw a dead Arapahoe lying in front of the door and a few paces beyond four live ones, their paint blurred in the indistinct light. As the door opened they lifted their voices and advanced; but their head man, stepping out of the door, raised his right hand and they halted, their yells breaking off.

Will watched, his heart seeming to pulsate in his throat, while the head man talked to the others. They didn't appear to accept his words with pleasure. They brandished their hatchets and bows and again lifted their voices toward the cabin. Two of them seized the dead Indian by the door and placed him at the head man's feet and pointed to him; the other two had brought another dead one from the pole shack in the rear, where Will had killed him.

For a long minute Will thought the head man was going to let the bargain go in the face of these two reminders; but in the end he barked at his men and they picked up their dead and followed reluctantly to the plumb brush where Will knew they'd picketed their ponies.

He waited until long after the hoof-beats had died across the prairie and the first streaks of sun shot up across the east; then he turned and went inside.

Cathy stood where he had left her. She did not raise her eyes to his.

"They've skedaddled for good," he explained.

He waited for the full knowledge that she was safe to reach her; waited for the flash of her eyes, the words of acid that would come because he had refused to kill the Indian as she wished, because he had kicked her.

He thought he'd better get in his own defence before she exploded, so he said, "I know more about Indians than

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women, like you say, I reckon. Leastways I can count on him holdin' to his bargain stronger'n you held to the one you made when you vowed to honor and obey. I traded him his life for his word he wouldn't harm this cabin on this partic'lar war path.

"We're safe for a spell. Wouldn't have been good Indian sense to ask him to leave us alone for good. He'd 've died 'fore laying hold of a bargain like that. But we're safe for a spell and that's something."

AND now she raised her face. He looked at her and then looked closer. A bright sparkle welled at the roots of her dark lashes. The crying came with a rush and then she had her head against his chest, her arms around his waist. The sobs were quiet but deep and for some reason he had the thought that he was getting almost as much comfort and relief from them as she was.

"Will." She could hardly get her breath and when she did she raised up on her toes and drew his mouth to hers. His surprise was edged out by excitement. She hadn't kissed him that way even in Kentucky.

"When you didn't shoot him," she managed to say, "I thought you were settling to buy him off by getting rid of me. Will, I don't ever want to be anywhere with anybody except you. It's just that I've been so—"

But she didn't have to explain for him. He understood and was fussed at himself for not having figured it a lot sooner. Her hardness, the biting aggressiveness of her had taken form from the utter fright she'd concealed in her breast. Living alone like this, in Indian country—once she let her fear out there'd have been nothing of herself left, and she'd been afraid she'd fail him, fail herself.

He held her for a long time. This new softness seemed to have taken hold of her body and her lips too, and he wasn't eager to break the spell.

Finally he said, "Let's be going up"; and she put out the lamp and opened the window traps and followed him.

Half-way up the ladder he paused, debating whether to be strictly honest and explain that the bullet and powder he'd used firing through the door loophole had been the last in the cabin since she'd forced Sud to cart the pack-box away. He'd kept his extra powder and bullets in the dryness between the pelts; and therefore the credit she gave him for the object lesson didn't rightly belong to him.

Will thought it over, looking down at her. He grinned. She was standing at the foot of the ladder, one foot on the first rung, her head tilted to him. Her answering smile matched his.

AND that settled it. He had an idea there was no longer a stain of fear behind her smile and he meant to keep it that way. And also, he reflected, women were a great deal like Indians in the respect that they credited you with being only as smart as they thought you were.

So he said blandly, "Think I'll let that extra twenty to corn go and sleep till noon. That way I'll be up in time to meet the Express tomorrow afternoon and give a message to the rider. He's bound to come up with Sud somewheres west of here. Sud'll be right pleased to hear you're asking him back."

Her smile didn't alter. She nodded. He was annoyed at the relief he felt. He climbed through the trap and helped her up beside him. He took hold of her and moved her to him and said into her hair, "Reckon I'll get at that extra twenty maybe day after tomorrow. A man's got to get ahead a little and live like a decent white in these parts."

Then, because her only answer was an added pressure of her small arms around his ribs, and because he feared his burst of generosity might be taken as a sign he wasn't wearing both the leggings in this outfit, he gave her a small shove, saying gruffly, "Turn that bunk down. It's broad daylight."

First thing he knew, he calculated as he shucked out of his shirt, he'd be eating brain-food for supper tomorrow instead of the antelope steak he planned on hunting down soon as he borrowed powder and bullets from the Express rider.

That smile of hers, as she sat up in bed and loosened her hair; it was dutiful as tarnation and dangerous as the bite of her tongue had been. A woman could find more damn' ways to skin a buck. It was impossible, he realized, to stamp out every resource of a looker.

"I wish he were a well-groomed lad—
He really ought to read this ad!
It says for comfort, thrift and speed
These Thin Gillettes are what men need!"
Precision made to fit your Gillette Razor exactly
THIN
Gillette
BLADES
Gillette
Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade
4 for 10c
8 for 19c
Save Extra Money! Get The Big New Economy Package, 12 For 27c
A-11-1

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Viva Gringo!

Welcome to Inferno, cowboy. No shooting permitted during siesta time; but as soon as the town wakes up, you better reach for your six-gun—and be ready to shout, "Viva Villa!" in front of a firing squad. . . . A complete short novel

CHAPTER I

THE DEVIL'S CANTINA

JOHNNY TYNE believed in fate. Nothing but fate, he claimed could have brought him to Infierno in the first place—and nothing but the same unknown power could have decreed that he should kill a man, make a friend, and steal a girl all in the time it takes two suns to pass under the bottom half of the world.

And there are many who agree with him.

Such as Rojo Red, whose two names mean the same thing, and who swears under both to shoot Johnny Tyne on sight.

Johnny Tyne was on a bender. Johnny had been a bad boy in school, and had not changed much as his legs lengthened, his chest deepened, and he grew up into a hard-riding cowpuncher. His old man, Big Jack Tyne, had managed thoroughly to spoil Johnny as a kid, yet did not understand why Johnny couldn't settle down as a man. So, when the whole Box T herd of cowponies was stolen while Johnny played poker with the boys, the old man fired his son.

Much to Big Jack's surprise, the kid packed his doo-funnies, climbed aboard the only mount left on the ranch, and rode away.

Johnny rode slowly. He took it easy because Bessie was an old mare who had had many a foal in her day and had lost the wild spirits of youth. He and Bessie were pals. They had been born on the same day and had grown up together. He told Bessie to take him some place where his old man would be out of his hair forever. Bessie, however, had a mind of her own. Each morning after Johnny had broken up camp she would turn right back for home. Johnnie and Bessie would discuss this for a while until Johnny won the argument, reined her around, and started at an easy trot toward the south.

So it was that they leisurely passed through Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and into Chihuahua to the town of Infierno, which means Hell and is twice as hot. At first, Johnny thought the place was deserted, for the cross-

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Johnny rode right into the middle of a celebration

By Arthur Lawson

Author of "Border Fire," "Squaw Lady," etc.

roads that formed the town were lined with crumbling pink and green and blue adobe houses; and the only sign of life was a sleeping dog and half a dozen scrawny goats who nibbled the dusty weeds along the roadway.

But eventually he came to a yellow building in better condition than the rest, covered with strange paintings. There was a picture of a drunken man in a gutter with a *señorita* kneeling beside him, praying and crying. There was a great, lurid splash of red on another wall, coming from a volcano, and three Mexicans, one clutching a cactus plant, one a pigskin, one a bottle, were tumbling into it, looking drunkenly pleased. There were other pictures on the building and they all puzzled Johnny until he figured out the sign above the door.

The sign said: *Cantina Infierno,* which can be translated as *"Hell's Saloon."*

But Johnny didn't know that. The *cantina,* he thought, meant a water-bottle, like the canteen he had carried so often when riding the range. The *Infierno* meant nothing at all to him—but now he could explain the pictures. Carrie Nation must have wandered down here sometime in the past, reformed the town, painted those pictures to show the evils of drink, and set up a water station in the town's saloon. It made him thirsty. It reminded him of the cool rivers of Montana.

"Well," Johnny said to Bessie. "I guess we get off here. There's somebody inside there snoring. Must of got drunk on water. These Mexicans are funny people, ain't they?"

JOHNNY slipped from the saddle, loosened the girth, dropped Bessie's reins over the hitchrack and stepped into the cantina. It was cool in there and dark. But he

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could see that he was right. This place had been a saloon once, and very recently. He could smell the bitterness of stale alcohol.

Following the snore, he came to a dark, fat man sleeping with his head in his arms, behind the bar. There were many bottles of water on a shelf near the man. Johnny considered this situation. The Mexican seemed so peaceful it would be a shame to wake him, so Johnny leaned over the bar, reached a bottle and pulled the cork. Too bad this wasn't cold, Johnny thought, as he opened his dry mouth and tipped the bottle.

Johnny was never quite sure what happened immediately after that.

He felt as if he had swallowed a load of liquid fire. His mouth burned, his throat blazed. He dropped the bottle, swearing. Got some of the stuff up his nose and spit out the rest. There were tears in Johnny's eyes.

"My God!" he shouted. "I'm poisoned."

The Mexican woke up and saw Johnny there crying and swearing. He started to shout, too.

"Ladrónes! Madre de Dios!"

"Get me something," Johnny yelled, "before it kills me."

"Pelado!" the Mexican shouted. *"Ladrón—Por Dios."*

He dragged a shotgun from under the bar and pointed its two big barrels at Johnny Tyne.

Johnny pointed to his open mouth, blew as if on a fire. "Water! I'm poisoned."

The bartender shook his big head, looked lost. He had never faced anything like this before. He thought the gringo was crazy, and he kept his finger on the trigger of the gun.

Then a curtain, made of beans strung like beads, hanging from an opening in the rear of the room, rattled open, and a vision appeared to Johnny Tyne. She was small and lovely, in a full skirt and short-sleeved blouse, the kind the Mexican women wear. Her feet were bare, her legs and arms brown. But her hair was the color of new gold and her eyes were the blue of Montana's sky at dusk.

One other thing Johnny noticed in that brief, hurried moment: Her small hand held a sixshooter pointed steadily for a spot between his eyes.

"You must be pretty hard up, cowboy," she said, "to try holding up this place."

None of this made any sense to Johnny. He swallowed. The burning in his mouth and throat was subsiding. He said:

"I wasn't pinching the joint, ma'am. I just wanted a drink of water. Saw that canteen sign. I didn't want to wake up this feller, so I helped myself." He shuddered. "I got that rat poison," he said dismally.

The girl laughed. She said something in Spanish to the bartender. He shrugged, put up his shotgun. Then she slipped her sixshooter under her blouse with the barrel held by the waistband of her skirt. She was laughing so hard now there were tears in her eyes.

"That's *mescal*," she said. "Made of cactus thorns. Like gin. But *muy piquante!*"

"You mean it's drinkin' liquor?" Johnny asked.

"Yes," she said, "but very hot."

Johnny sighed. He could feel what little he had swallowed turning over in his stomach. It was strangely pleasant. But getting it there had not been fun at all. He fished into his pocket, dropped a silver dollar on the bar.

"I guess that'll pay for it, ma'am. Sorry I made the mistake. I won't make it again 'cause I'm headin' right back home. If that's what they drink in this country it's no place for old man Tyne's little boy, Johnny."

"We do have water, too," the girl said, laughter still in her blue eyes. "In the rainy season. But it's not very popular."

"I'll come back *then*," Johnny mumbled.

It took all the strength of his will to stop looking at her and to turn toward the doorway where Bessie was curiously looking inside. Gosh, the girl was beautiful in her bare feet. Why didn't women at home dress like that? Why were they all either old biddies or honkeytonk queens where he came from?

It was a puzzle that Johnny could not answer.

"Adios," the girl called after him. "Come see us again some day!"

Johnny grinned over his shoulder. "I sure will, sister."

She was smiling softly. It made Johnny's heart jump and started a blind pounding in his skull. He had better get out of here, he decided, while he could still make it. That cactus juice was affecting his mind.

HE TURNED toward the doorway. Bessie still stood with her head inside, watching the excitement. The rest of the door was blocked by a big man, dark of face, fancily dressed, standing on one leg.

"Just a second, pardner," Johnny said. "I'll get ol' Bessie out of the way."

The stranger's black eyes turned on Johnny Tyne for a moment. They were cold as agate. Then Johnny discovered why the hombre was standing on only one leg. The other was swung back. As Johnny stepped forward, the man viciously kicked Bessie in the belly and shouted:

"Vamos!"

His big Mexican spurs ripped Bessie's flank.

Bessie screamed, crow-hopped through the door into the cantina. Johnny, loco-mad, leaped for the Mexican. In a flash he was a crazy man, so intent on killing this stranger who had injured his old horse that he never even heard the blond girl crying:

"No—don't do it, *señor. Madre de—*"

Johnny got the man by the throat, lifted him clear of the ground, then smashed his right fist into the smoothly shaven chin and dropped him onto the floor.

"Get up and fight!" Johnny yelled. "Nobody's goin' to kick my Bessie an'—"

The man rolled over, got to his hands and knees. Beyond him, the door was packed with little dark-faced men. Bessie had gotten into a corner where she felt safe after first kicking a table to splinters. The girl and the bartender were behind him, and Johnny did not know which side they would take.

Not that he thought of it at the moment, for he was mad clear through, his only interest at the time being to beat the life out of the hombre who had kicked Bessie.

The man's hands went up. Johnny thought he was quitting; then that the Mexican was brushing his hair out of his eyes, stalling to get breath before attacking again. Then Johnny heard the girl cry, her voice sharp with fear:

"The *cuchillo*—the knife! Look out, Johnny!"

The Mexican's eyes were cold with hatred, unblinking, as his hand moved forward with the speed of a snake's tongue. White sunlight glistened on metal. Johnny knew nothing of knife throwers. He had not even suspected that this Mexican carried a slim, razor-sharp Bowie in a greased holster inside the collar at the back of his neck. Johnny

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was caught so short he had no time to duck, no time to dodge it, no time to draw a six-shooter and defend himself from this treachery.

It was a dream—the blast of a gun—the ring of metal. A bad dream.

The knife jumped from the Mexican's hand, whirled like the gun-powder-loaded pinwheels Mexicans use in celebrating fiestas. It went high, backward, smacking into the wall and dropping to the floor with the clang of fine steel.

Then Johnny snapped out of it. He did not wait for this snake in fancy charro clothing to get to his feet and pull another stunt like that one. He gave him just what the Mexican had given Bessie, kicked him hard, full in the face, high cowboy's heels crashing into the man's windpipe, sharp spurs ripping the man's elegant shirt.

The Mexican went back on his heels, collapsed with a sigh. Johnny picked him up, lifted him over his head and flung him out the doorway. Like tenpins, the hurtling body mowed down the little men gathered there.

Johnny had his gun in hand now. He stepped into the sunlight.

"Git!" he howled. "And if you come back, I'll shoot every damn one of you."

Four men climbed out of the dust, looking furtively back at the cantina. They picked up their unconscious boss, draped him, belly-down, over the silver-mounted saddle on his fine horse. Then they jumped into their saddles and rode away from there, spurring hard.

Johnny looked after them. It seemed that he had known these hombres before. There was something damnedly familiar about them. Then he shrugged. It was just an hallucination—he could not have known them.

JOHNNY took a deep breath, strode back into the cantina, up to the bar, to slap down a bright silver dollar. "I'll take some of that cactus juice, Hosey," he said.

Fearfully, the bartender put out a bottle. The girl had not moved from the curtained doorway. The sixshooter was in her hand again, not aiming at anything in particular, and a faint wisp of gunsmoke hung in the air above her. Johnny noticed that a button had torn from her blouse, yanked off when she tried to get the gun in a hurry.

"Gosh, sister, that's shootin'!" He grinned at her. "He would of had me if you hadn't done that. If you want anythin', ever—just remember Johnny Tyne. He'll go through hell to pay that back."

"Then you better go through hell right away, Johnny Tyne," she said softly. "This town is Hell—that's what Infierno means. That hombre you were playing with is El Cuchillo—the Knife!"

Johnny felt good now. He was having fun. "He's goin' to have a crik in his neck for a long time."

"I said that hombre is El Cuchillo. He'll be back."

It was not the name, but the manner of her saying it, that made Johnny realize that he had tangled with somebody really tough. He had never heard of this El Cuchillo before. It meant nothing at all to him.

He laughed. "I'll fix him for keeps—next time." Then the laughter faded out and Johnny added: "You're scared of that hombre."

"He doesn't have any rules," the girl avoided a direct answer. "He'll get you when you're not looking."

"I have eyes in the back of my head," Johnny boasted.

"They didn't help you a minute ago. If I hadn't knocked that knife out of his hand—" She left the rest for Johnny to imagine. He shuddered. Then she came from the doorway, close to him, so near that he could smell the fragrance of her golden hair. "Please, Johnny Tyne, will you go—and not come back?" she begged.

Johnny said: "You're afraid of him, and I'm going to stick around. Why didn't you shoot him when you had the chance?"

Her eyes flickered. There was fear still in them as they turned away from Johnny. "I'm not afraid of him, and—and he means a lot to me, Johnny." Johnny could not believe this. "El Cuchillo is a bad man to cross, but I couldn't shoot him. Now, go, Johnny—and stay away."

Funny she should have a feeling like that for a snake of El Cuchillo's stripe. Well, okay, he'd go. But never come back? That was something he would not promise. He wanted to get in another lick on the hombre who had kicked Bessie—and another look at the girl who had saved his life.

"Okay," he agreed. Then his eyes suddenly opened wide. "Say, I thought there was something funny about those hombres. Like I'd seen them before. But it wasn't them—it was the horses. My old man's horses!"

"I think you made a mistake!" It was a new voice to Johnny, a man's voice. The man was big, completely filling the doorway that was hung with polished beans strung like dangling beads. In the gloom, the man's red hair, splashed with gray, was like a dying campfire. "All horses look alike in Mexico," the man said. "Now run along, cowboy. Do as Panchita says."

"By God," Johnny shouted, "they *were* my old man's horses!"

"No, they weren't!" The red-headed man's voice was deadly low.

Johnny glanced back at the girl who had stepped away from him. She had not put up her six-shooter, and her eyes that a moment ago had seemed ready to fill with tears, were direct and cold.

"You made a mistake," she said.

Johnny looked over toward the bartender. He was handling a shotgun. The man in the doorway carelessly held a rifle under his arm.

"I guess I did," Johnny said ."Yessir, I guess I did make a mistake."

He turned from the bar. He back tingled as he led Bessie through the doorway to the dusty street. The sharp sun smarted in his eyes.

JOHNNY rode through town. It was swarming with people now, little naked kids in huge sombreros, men wearing unbleached pajamas, women plodding along barefooted, and many a long-eared, gray-haired burro. As he jogged along he realized that he had arrived during the siesta while everybody slept in the shade. Now they were up again, carrying on their endless chores.

He came to the plaza. There were dusty trees here, sparse grass and shrubs. A fountain squirted half-heartedly in the little square. Men lounged around. Women, in tiny stalls, shouted to him as he passed, peddling all sorts of things from clothing, huaraches, to gay-colored fruit and steaming tamales. But Johnny went on.

At the cathedral, Bessie halted while Johnny stared. It was a beautiful building, massive, intricately carved. It dwarfed everything here. But to Johnny it looked more like a fort than a church, and he wondered about it. He wondered about the golden-haired girl back in the Cantina Infierno. She had been afraid of that Cuchillo hombre.

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Cuchillo's dark eyes had been cold with hatred when she called out to Johnny to watch out for the knife. Yet Cuchillo, the girl, and the red-headed man were allies. And those horses *were* Box T!

"*Por l'amor de Dios. . .*"

It was a mumbling beggar. Johnny gave him a dollar and the beggar bit it before bowing low, rattling quick Spanish in thanks. Johnny had to laugh when the man ran off, forgetting his limp.

"Meester, for fi' cents I show you."

Johnny had no idea what the kid would show him. It was a youngster in tattered pants, half a shirt and a ragged sombrero. The kid clutched the nickel Johnny gave him. He was very polite, this little Mexican. He pointed to the cathedral.

"She are t'ree honred years," he told Johnny. "You weel come?"

He indicated that Johnny should get off his horse and go inside the cathedral with him. Johnny observed that the church must have been at least the age the kid gave it. Like the rest of the town it was beginning to crumble. He had heard about the magnificence of these cathedrals in Mexico, but he shook his head.

"I got all I can look at out here," he said. "And, besides, I'm kinda busy." The kid had talked as if he knew his way around. Johnny held up a silver dollar. The boy's eyes shone. "I'll tell you what I do want to see," Johnny said.

The kid grinned. "*Muchachas? Si, señor.* These way."

He reached for the dollar. Johnny was beginning to catch onto this lingo. He still did not know any words. It was the expression he was learning to read. By the light in the kid's eyes he guessed the meaning of *muchachas*.

"Nope, I don't want to see any girls," he said. "I'm too busy for that. But I'll give you the dollar, kid, if you take me to a hombre by the name of El Cuchillo."

The boy's eyes glazed. The hand that was reaching for the dollar suddenly went stiff. Then he ran as hard as he could, sending up a tiny dust-cloud, dodging, to disappear behind the church.

"I'll be damned," Johnny said to himself. To his horse, he added: "Ain't that somepin', Bessie?"

Bessie apparently thought so. Agreeing with the Mexican boy, she broke into a trot, taking Johnny around the plaza, back to the road that they had used in entering town.

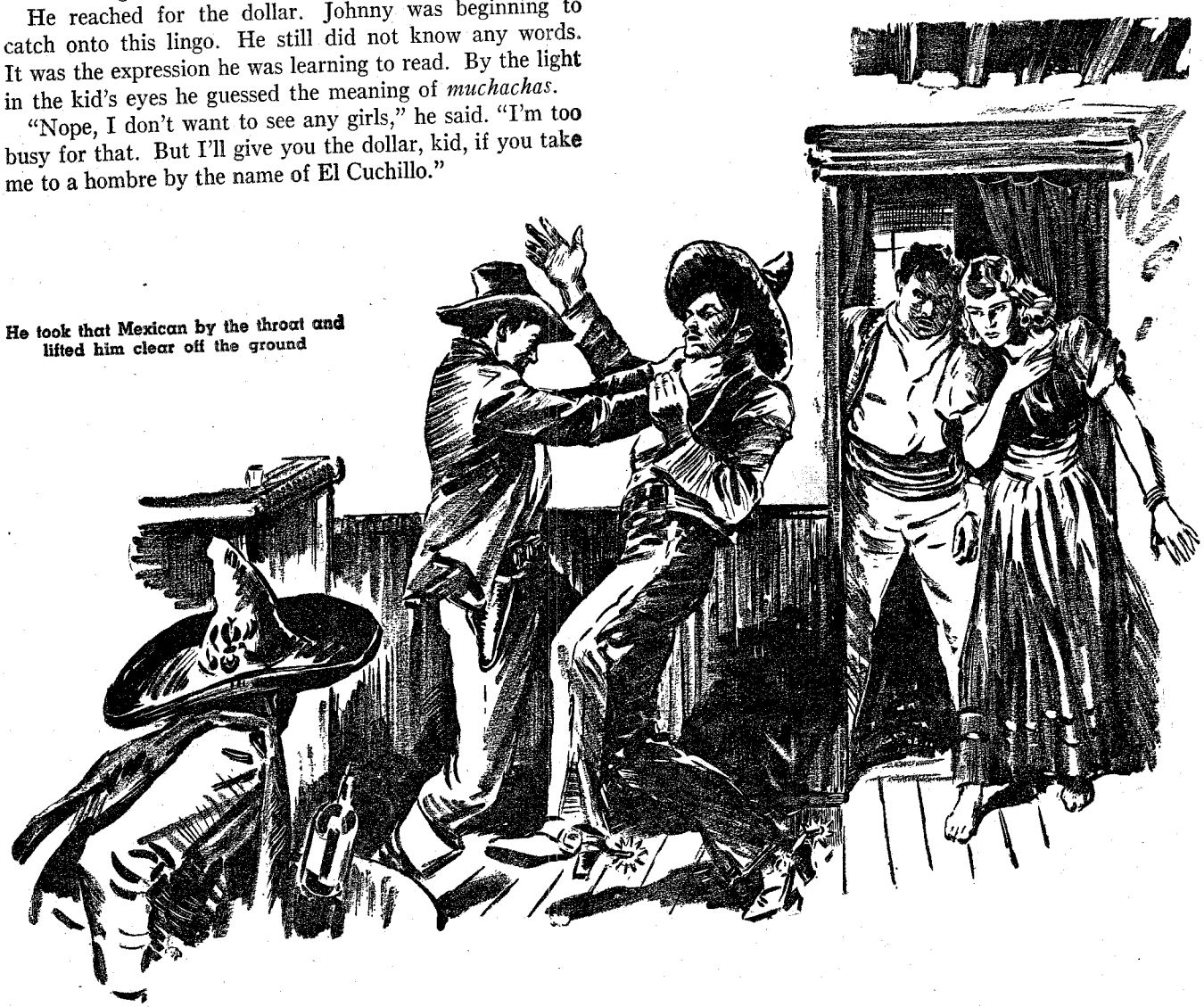
Johnny smiled grimly. He tried not to look at the Cantina Infierno as he passed. He wanted those who watched from inside to think that he was really leaving town and that he was not coming back.

CHAPTER II

MEXICAN WELCOME

HIS passing did not go unobserved. The fat bartender brought the news to the back room where the red-headed man sat at a cigarette-scarred table with a tall, handsome caballero. The caballero drew deep on a brown-paper cigarette and blew a thick ring that sailed slowly toward the shadowed ceiling.

"Rojo Red, that's one thing I'll always regret," he said, "not being here when that gringo kicked El Cuchillo in the face. He was still unconscious when I saw them carrying him out of town."



He took that Mexican by the throat and lifted him clear off the ground

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"Maybe dead," Rojo Red said. "Mike, I'm scared."

"What of?" The caballero always seemed to be laughing. Now he frowned. "He a friend of yours—the gringo?"

"Never saw him before. It's Panchita. When her mother died I should have gotten her out of this hell hole. Even if El Cuchillo doesn't live, his men saw her shoot the knife out of his hand. They'll be back. What they can't do to him—they'll do to her."

"Where is she?"

"She's in the patio."

Mike said: "When it's dark, get her out of here. I'm going to catch up with that gringo and bring him back. You say he was killing mad?"

"Yeah. Easy-going kid. Don't seem to have a nerve in him. But I never saw a hombre blow up like he did when El Cuchillo kicked that old crowbait mare of his."

"Were those his horses?" Mike's voice had lost its soft Mexican inflection and become hard, incisive. "You know where you got them?"

Rojo Red shrugged. "I don't know where they came from. I bought them from—uh—the boys. They'll be bringing some more along pretty soon. But"—he leaned forward in the table and his voice dropped—"I ain't got a doubt that they were Johnny Tyne's."

Mike stood up. "It would be nice," he said, "veree nize to be rid of El Cuchillo. It would be veree, veree nize to be rid of him and not be blamed for it. And if we shoot his killer, it might help us with El Presidente."

Rojo Red shuddered. When Mike talked that way, and a touch of the Mexican accent came into his voice, it always gave Rojo the shivers. Rojo had broken the law in many ways during his life. He had killed his man. But he had never learned how to doublecross with a clear conscience.

"Damn you, Mike," he said bitterly, "if that's your scheme, don't count me in on it." He stood up, his back stiff. "And don't ring my daughter in on it either!"

Mike laughed easily.

"Forget it," he said. "Panchita and I will be married some day, and I'd never do a thing to hurt my future wife or father-in-law." He stepped toward the door. "I'll be back with that gringo before midnight. Let it be known. But get Panchita out of here, some place where she'll be safe."

"I'll take care of her," Rojo Red said. "You take care of your own little schemes."

AS BESSIE trotted along, Johnny saw things he had not noticed when riding into town. It was as if the girl with the new-gold hair, the beggar and the kid, the fine but dilapidated-looking cathedral had all combined to open his eyes. He saw the dusty mesquite covering the flat country, the mountains, blue and gigantic and unreal to the south and west. He saw the ratty goats eating mesquite beans, a gray coyote in the distance, his head up, watching him, backed by an endless planting of cactus that was in neat, even rows. He saw, too, in his mind, a picture of Infierno many years ago when the adobe houses were new and the town was rich enough to build that great cathedral.

And Johnny wondered what had happened to make it only a ghost of its former glory and a hangout for horse-thieves and paupers.

He rode along, thinking so hard of these things that it was Bessie who discovered that they were being followed. Bessie, possibly remembering the kick and the spur mark that still stung her flank, broke into a fast run. Johnny looked back over his shoulder. A dust cloud whirled along the road, red in the glow of a setting sun. A rider was coming up at a good, fast clip.

Bessie was willing, but having been a mother so often, she was unable to outdistance even one of those tired goats feeding on mesquite beans. So Johnny pulled her down to a walk, looked over his six-shooter to make sure there was no sand in the works, and pretended to admire the view.

When hoofbeats became audible, Johnny glanced back again. When the beat of them came close and the tattoo of a gallop broke down into a trot, he pulled over to the side of the road. This was not one of Cuchillo's boys, but a stranger to Johnny Tyne, and a wide, friendly smile showed his teeth white against dark skin. He rode with both hands on the reins, well up in front of him at a safe distance from his holstered guns.

The stranger halted beside Johnny, lifted his big, spangled sombrero.

"She ees Johnny Tyne," he said, "or am I the mistake.

"You are not the mistake," Johnny said, feeling very much in the open. "But don't pull the old gag that you saw me somewhere before—because you didn't."

"And much is the sorrow for that!" The stranger held out his hand. "Veree glad I am." He bowed. "Don Miguel Kelly y Alvarez *a sus órdenes.*"

Johnny shook with him. The man's grip was solid. It made Johnny feel as if he could trust him. "Pleased to meet you, Mr. Ordenes," he said.

Don Miguel laughed heartily. "Meester Ordenes. She ees fonny. Americanos ees alway make the joke. Don Yonny, *a sus órdenes,* she ees to say, at your service."

Johnny laughed with him then. It was a wonderful world, he decided. Here Don Miguel was thinking Johnny was odd—and Johnny thought the Mexicans were funny.

"Don Miguel," Johnny said. "I guess I just don't know my way around this country. You gents don't do things like we do back home. Why are you at my service? I didn't hire you to do anything for me."

"Eet ees just the politeness," Don Miguel explained. "Eet does not mean but the same like 'pleased tuh meecher'."

"That's right," Johnny nodded. "We say that when we ain't pleased at all. Like just now. But it's okay with me."

"Ah, she ees fine," Don Miguel said. He glanced down the road in the direction from which he had come. There were no more dust clouds in the crimson sunset. The goats had started wandering slowly back toward Infierno. Don Miguel bowed again to Johnny. "The night, she ees here. You, Don Yonny, have done me the beeg good, the favor. My house, she ees yours."

THIS gent was nuts, Johnny decided. He was only curious now how Don Miguel happened to know him and what the favor might be that had been so big the Mexican felt he had to give away his house to even the score. He was about to ask, when it occurred to him that this might be another of those Mexican phrases which did not mean anything. So he said instead:

"Thanks for the house, Don Miguel, but I won't need it. This country and me don't savvy each other. I'm headin' out of it and back home as fast as my Bessie'll take me."

Don Miguel could not be put down. The white teeth flashed again.

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"For the favor—I mus' geeve Don Yonny the favor. You 'ave keek een the face El Cuchillo."

Johnny grinned, thinking about that scrap with El Cuchillo. He'd like to get another crack at that hombre. "I would of kicked him twice as hard," Johnny said, "only I was sorta off balance."

"My beeg sorrow," said Don Miguel, looking very sad, "ees that I do not see these keek. I weel feex heem, as the Americano say, so Don Yonny keek, w'at you call heem, *un mas*—wance again!"

That Johnny itched for the chance showed plainly in his eyes. Don Miguel added:

"I weel also show Don Yonny hees *caballos*—hees 'orses."

"You know where my horses are at?" Johnny burst out.

"*Si,*" Don Miguel said. He laughed heartily as if there was a big joke. "Me, I buy these 'orses from the *ladrón* —the rustler. *Muy barato*—veree cheap. El Cuchillo, he come in the night and steal them."

This did not sound funny to Johnny Tyne. But he guessed he would never understand the Mexican sense of humor. Even if he had bought some rustled horses, or if he had stolen them himself, he would not think it so funny as Don Miguel did to have them hi-jacked.

It made Johnny wonder if this smooth-looking caballero wasn't putting him on. Maybe he had been sent out by El Cuchillo to lead Johnny into a trap where they could even up the score for that kick in the fce.

It was a chance Johnny would have to take if he hoped to get back his horses.

"El Cuchillo is an enemy of yours? You'll tell me where to find him?"

"*Si, poco pronto.*"

"And then," Johnny asked. "Supposin' I get back those horses, then what are you going to do? You reckon on keeping them because you bought them? Or do I get them, because they were mine in the first place?"

Don Miguel shrugged expressively. "*Mañana,* she ees anothaire day. Who know w'at *mañana* weel breeng?"

Johnny certainly didn't know. But Don Miguel's answer made him laugh. He held out a hand. "*Okay,* Don Miguel. I liked the way you put that about *mañana.* I'll string along with you, hombre. But don't get the notion in your head that I'll be asleep tomorrow."

Don Miguel shook his hand. There was a challenge in his eyes that Johnny did not miss. Don Miguel, however, he was sure, would behave okay until they had eliminated El Cuchillo. After that he would bear watching.

"Okay," Don Miguel repeated. "That 'okay' she ees the nize word. He lifted his reins. "*Vámonos!*"

A funny word and a funny world, thought Johnny Tyne. *Vámonos* sounded more like vamoose, a home-town word to "beat it" than it did like "let's go." He smiled thinking about it, thinking how these Mexicans had everything upside-down. They painted terrible pictures of drunks going to hell on the sides of their saloons to encourage people to come in and do likewise. They gave you their house when they meant nothing of the kind. They promised to help you now and cut your throat tomorrow.

A funny world and funny people in it. Don Miguel was repeating *Vámanos* and gesturing to Johnny to follow. Why not?

The cowboy tickled Bessie's ribs with his spurs, and the old mare trotted along, doing her best to keep up with Don Miguel's big gelding.

CHAPTER III

BACK TO HADES

DON MIGUEL turned off the main road for a side path leading in the general direction of the maguay plantation where Johnny had seen the coyote earlier in the evening. They rode steadily toward a clump of great trees at the foot of a blue mountain. It was dark when they arrived, candles flickering like fire-flies behind the leaves, and it seemed to Johnny that they had come to another town, smaller than El Infierno, completely surrounded by an old wall.

Beyond a heavy, newly-painted gate, a short, dark man, bare-footed, in the pajama-like white clothing of the poor Mexican, ran up to Don Miguel. Don Miguel spoke in rapid Spanish. The man lifted his straw hat to Johnny, then trotted alongside as Johnny and Don Miguel rode to the big house some quarter of a mile from the wall. As they rode along, Johnny noticed other houses, small, made of adobe and thatched with the wide base leaves of the maguay cactus. He passed a couple of long, barn-like structures and smelled the same strange, damp-rotten odor that had come to him in the Cantina Infierno.

Then they were at the big house, bright with strong lights. Its main door was of wrought iron, stout as the entry-way of the Deer Lodge Prison up in Montana. Unlike that door, this one was open. Beside it, stood another Mexican who bowed deeply as Don Miguel dismounted.

It gave Johnny a queer feeling of uncertainty. But he had gotten himself into this with his eyes open. He was not going to back out now.

He slipped from the saddle. The little Mexican who had come from the gate, took the horses to lead them off into the night. Don Miguel was speaking to Johnny, waving toward the door, repeating that the house was Don Yonny's. Johnny thanked him for the present and went inside, blinking his eyes in the glare of many-candled crystal chandeliers. Don Miguel followed, spoke to the servant, then took Johnny's arm and led him into the main room where a low fire flickered in a great, carved fireplace.

This place was a dream to Johnny Tyne—like the fairy palaces his mother had described to him when he was a baby. But Don Miguel was very real. His smile was wide.

"Fine dump, huh, like the Americano say?"

"Yeah," Johnny had to admit, "it sure is some dump. Who'd you steal her off? Or did you buy this *muy barato,* too?"

"She ees of my grandfather, of hees grandfather, and she ees today my *ranchero.*" Don Miguel frowned. "But *mañana—*"

He opened his hands, wide and empty.

Johnny walked on, past great oak tables and chairs, red leather, gold and silver trimming and ornaments, up to the head-high fireplace and its warm glow.

"What do you mean—*mañana?*" he asked. Don Miguel had spoken of *mañana* before. "What's going to happen tomorrow?"

"*Quien sabe?*" Don Miguel said darkly. "Who knows?" He cupped a hand behind his ear as if listening for some minute sound. "Trobble. Wan hears eet een the air. *Revolución.* The people, they are seek of *El Presidente* and he weel not leesen to them."

"Gosh," Johnny said, "I thought he had that job for keeps!"

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"Even the forever has the end," Don Miguel said. *"Mañana—"*

Tomorrow, Johnny thought, was sure going to be a big day. It was just his luck to cross the border with a thing like this brewing. He wanted to hear more about it, but the servant was coming down the room and Don Miguel was looking at a chandelier with an air of preoccupation. The *mozo* carried a silver tray holding a bright porcelain bottle and two crystal glasses that reflected the candlelight. There was a yellow bowl containing quartered limes; a little dish of salt beside it.

The *mozo* set the tray on a stand near the red leather chairs, then backed to the wall, standing there like a butler, his face dark and blank. Don Miguel poured Johnny and himself each a drink of pale, amber liquor. Johnny was about to swallow it as he would have a slug of red-eye when he noticed that Don Miguel was going through some sort of Mexican ritual. He had picked up a bit of the lime and deposited a pinch of salt in the natural little depression at the base of his left thumb. Curious, Johnny followed suit.

Don Miguel lifted his glass with his right hand, held it before his eyes. *"Salud!"*

"Mud in yore eye!" Johnny said.

Don Miguel licked the salt, drank the drink, sucked the lime. Johnny did likewise. Tears smarted in his eyes. He licked his lips, grinned.

Don Miguel bowed. "She ees the *grande* compliment. We make her ourself."

"You made this stuff?"

Don Miguel nodded proudly.

That explained the great planting of maguay, the long buildings on the road to the big house, and the rotten smell of them. Don Miguel was in the liquor business. He and all his grandfathers had made a fortune from it.

"These"—Don Miguel indicated the bottle—"ees *mescal*. Veree old. Two years een the keg."

A funny way, Johnny thought, to mention age in such an ancient country. But time was long in this country and the thirst for *mescal* always strong. And *mañana? Quien sabe?* Who knows what will happen tomorrow? You might as well drink it now.

"About *mañana,*" Johnny said, "and those horses and *El Presidente—*"

Don Miguel wouldn't let him finish. *"Si!"* he cried. *"Bravo!"* Quickly he poured two more drinks and made a toast. *"Viva El Presidente!"*

Johnny drank. As the stuff jolted down into his stomach, he heard a cry from the far end of the room:

"Abajo Madero!"

IT WAS a woman's voice, and Johnny recognized it. His head turned swiftly on his neck. In the brief glance he had seen Don Miguel's cheek muscles go stiff, and a sudden dull burning in the eyes of the mozo.

Then he was watching the golden-haired girl from the cantina walking gracefully on bare feet down the long room.

At the fireplace she stopped, whirled around, her full dress flaring about her hips. She stood with her back to the glowing coals and smiled warmly on the two men. Nodding to the servant, she said:

"Buenas noches, Pablo." To Johnny and Don Miguel, she added. "Good evening, *señores!"*

Don Miguel and the mozo bowed. This was something Johnny would have to learn if he hung around this country much longer.

"Buenas noches, señorita!"

"Pablo," the girl said to the mozo, *"favor de traerme un tasse de agua?"* To Johnny, she added: "Don't look so foolish. I'm only asking for a glass of water."

"For all I knew," Johnny grinned, "you might have been telling him to cut off my head."

The girl laughed. The mozo, a sullen-looking hombre Johnny wouldn't have had hanging around any house he lived in, seemed not to want to do as the girl had asked. Slowly, he shuffled off. When he was gone, the girl said hastily to Don Miguel:

"What's the idea of bringing Johnny Tyne out here? You might just as well have shot him in the back in town and saved some trouble."

The pleasant glow of liquor became ice in Johnny's stomach. He reached for his gun. Swiftly, the girl stopped him. She let her hand remain on his as she said:

"No—not now. You won't need it yet. Mike's okay, but a fool."

Don Miguel laughed. "It was his idea. He wanted another chance at El Cuchillo. I told him I'd fix it up."

Johnny Tyne felt the fool now. Only the girl's soft hand on his kept him from pulling this gun. Don Miguel had led him into a trap. The girl called him Mike—and this Mexican who had stumbled through his English now spoke the language perfectly.

"When Pablo comes with the water," Panchita said, "you and I will say goodnight, Johnny Tyne. Mike, with the help of my father, was planning a little doublecross. He's an expert at it."

Johnny's gun-hand tugged under the girl's restraint.

"Your father know you came out here?" Don Miguel asked hastily.

"No, he doesn't. He sent me over to Francisco's house. I guessed what was up—and I didn't like it." Her blue eyes darkened. *"El Presidente. . ."*

Her lovely mouth shut with a snap. Facing her, his back to the doorway, Johnny could not see what had caused her to stop. Now she was smiling again as she had when she first came in, pretending that this was only a little social call, and the *mozo,* Pablo, shuffled up on his silent sandals, bearing a glass and water that misted the outside of a silver pitcher. He poured Panchita a drink. She said *"Gracias"* when she took it. When she had finished she said something in Spanish followed by:

"Now we shall go, Johnny Tyne."

OUTSIDE, while waiting for the horses, Johnny studied this girl with furtive glances. Here in the soft night she seemed lovelier than she had in the saloon, smaller. Yet her round chin was set, and her shoulders square, and Johnny remembered the shot she had taken at El Cuchillo's knife, and knew that she would fight like a wildcat once she had a cause and was cornered.

He wanted to ask her many questions. But the feeling that Pablo was nearby kept him silent. He did not trust that hombre. Somehow he had gathered that Panchita and Don Miguel had no faith in him, either.

The servant who had taken the horses earlier came up with them now. The girl's big bay carried no saddle. She vaulted up, sitting on his back with both her legs on the nigh side as if in a side-saddle. Johnny climbed aboard old Bessie, and they trotted slowly down the path, by the big warehouses, the adobe huts, to the gate. There the servant left them and they rode on into the night.

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A moon like a flattened pumpkin hung in the sky, and the stars were very close in the crystal Mexican night. The dry hopelessness of the daytime had gone. Mystery and romance had taken its place.

Clear of the trees, the girl laughed softly, swung her right leg over the horse so that she was riding astride. It pushed her dress well up above her bare, brown knees.

"If you ever see my old man," she said to Johnny, "don't tell him I rode this way. He's old fashioned. He'd skin me alive."

Johnny forced his eyes away from her. She was so beautiful it hurt. Beautiful and strong, and not at all hard like the girls one would find in hometown honkeytonks. There was something wild about her, but it was the wildness of the mountain lion.

"He—is he that big red-headed gent?" Johnny asked.

"*Si, señor*. Rojo Red, they call him. He looks hard as granite, but he's got a big, tender heart."

"A big, tender heart," Johnny said, "that doesn't stop him from rigging a doublecross with that weasel, Don Miguel."

Her laughter was musical, soft as the night. She gave no answers as they trotted on through the yellow moonlight. When they came to the meeting of the side road and the main trail, she reined in. From far in the distance the yap of the coyote rang through the fields. She came close, forcing him to look down at her.

"So it's goodbye. Don Johnny," she said.

"Hell, no!" Johnny denied. "It's only—uh—hello. I'm taking you back to Infierno."

She pointed down the roadway as if she had not heard him. "Go straight. In two hours you will come to a big road. Take that. In two more days you will cross the Rio Grande del Norte." She kicked her horse in the ribs. "*Adios!*"

Johnny moved swiftly. It was instinct, rather than thought, that prompted him. He reached for her, just as her mount started to move. With both hands, he got her by the slender waist and the horse ran out from under her. Old Bessie sagged. The saddle creaked, but Johnny held on, and the girl was so startled she was sitting across his knees before she had a chance to put up a struggle.

"GOSH!" Johnny was as surprised as she that this had happened. "I—uh—didn't mean to do this, ma'am. I just wasn't ready for you to go yet."

Her eyes turned up to him. There was starlight in them, and though she did not actually move, he felt that she was cuddling closer to him.

"All my life," she said, "I've wanted something like this, dreamed of it. I've dreamed someone would come and take me away from Infierno." Her voice became brittle. "But it's too late now, Don Johnny. Put me down. My horse will come back in a minute."

She pushed at his chest, but he held his grip.

"I'll let you go as soon as you tell me two things. What's going on around here—and where are my horses?"

"I don't know where your horses are—and nothing's going on around here!"

She struggled to get away. It made Bessie stamp nervously, trying to keep balanced, and Johnny held her tighter. Now he wanted never to let her go. He laughed.

"Then it's an even swap, kid. I'll trade those horses to Mexico—for you. I'll take you back across the Border."

She was strong and wiry for all her soft roundness. But there was no use fighting against this tall gringo, and she had no real wish to struggle against him. She went lax in his arms and, because Bessie was fretting, he stepped down from the saddle and stood the girl on her bare feet facing him. He held her with one arm around her shoulder, and tipped up her chin so that she had to look at him.

"Rojo Red and Don Miguel are up to some sort of hell," he said. "They hate El Cuchillo, but are playing along with him. You're afraid I'll find out what they're doing and spill the beans."

"No!" She shook her head, causing the bright curls to dance in the starlight. She did not want to look in his eyes, but when she glanced down he lifted her face again. "I'm afraid for you," she said. "They can take care of themselves. El Cuchillo, you didn't kill him and they don't dare to. Mike was—I heard him talking—he was going to kill you when you had killed El Cuchillo!"

"I kinda thought so," Johnny said. The girl was trembling. Johnny's arm held her snugly. "I was ready for him." He was silent for a moment, looking past her, down the road to Infierno. Her horse had not come back as she promised. It had trotted on out of sight and Bessie was staring after it. He knew then what he had to do. He dropped his arm from her shoulder, causing her to glance up uncertainly.

"You better go back to Don Miguel's shack," he said, his lips thin. "Your horse has gone home. I'm gittin'."

"You're going back to Infierno!" she said slowly.

He stepped away silently, put a foot into the stirrup and went up onto Bessie's back. She caught his belt.

"You mustn't!" she cried. "You don't know what you're running into. El Cuchillo is one of *El Presidente's* men. If you go after him you'll have the whole Mexican army after you."

"The whole Mexican army ain't big enough," Johnny grinned.

He took her hands in his, moved them from his belt, held them for a moment.

"You and your old man are on the other team," he said, seeing light. "So is Don Miguel. But you're not quite ready yet. You haven't enough horses and guns and soldiers. You're afraid that *El Presidente* will find out about your schemes if anything happens to El Cuchillo!"

She would not answer. Her silence told him that he had discovered the truth. Then he dropped her hands, tickled Bessie with the spurs. Bessie lumbered ahead. The girl ran after him, calling:

"Don Johnny—Johnny Tyne—"

CHAPTER IV

FIESTA WITH LEAD

HE FORCED Bessie into the tight conglomeration of horses, mules, burros and rickety crow-baits crowding the front of the Cantina Infierno. That afternoon, during the siesta, you would have thought the town deserted. Now it looked as if there was some kind of celebration going on. Groups of men were gathered around the corners. Everywhere was movement, people, horses. The sound of a band playing martial music came to him from the plaza; and inside the saloon some men were singing while twanging the guitar.

You would never guess by the surface that a revolution was boiling below it.

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Johnny slid from the saddle, pushed his way through the crowded horses to the dusty sidewalk edging the cantina. He was a damn fool, he thought, to mix in with a thing like this. One lone *Americano*—and a Mexican revolution. He was a double-damned fool, for *El Presidente* had been in power for many years. *El Presidente* had filled the country with spies, men in his pay like El Cuchillo, men like that Pablo, who had served his master for many years and now wanted his master's goods. Johnny knew that he was a triple-damned fool to think that he could do anything for or against ten million people who were about to rise up and change their overlords who had kept in power through bribery and gunpowder.

But he did figure that even one lone *Americano* might be able to bring a little happiness into the blue eyes of a lovely *señorita*—and that he might, incidentally, get back some of his old man's horses.

So he stepped into the saloon, smiling, blinking his eyes, instantly aware that everyone there had heard of the gringo who had kicked El Cuchillo in the ugly face. They moved aside, making a path for him. At the bar they hastily drank their drinks, leaving the place bare for this man who had done what they all dreamed of doing.

Johnny Tyne stopped there, near the door that was hung with a curtain of stringed beans. The fat bartender, frightened to a pale yellow, waddled down to him. Johnny said:

"I want to see your boss." There was only blankness behind the fear on the barkeeper's face. Johnny struggled to remember the Spanish he had heard. "Favor de fetch Rojo Red!" he got out.

The blank look left the bartender's eyes. The fear remained. He pointed to the outside door with a trembling hand, said something in Spanish, then motioned with two hands as if throwing something away and added: "Rojo Red." He finished by shaking his head.

"Oh, so he's gone, huh?" Johnny said. "Okay; I'll wait for him."

Still smiling, he stepped through the curtain-shrouded doorway at the rear of the cantina. Because he did not want to block whatever light came through to the dark room, and because he was a cautious man, he moved swiftly sidewise, bringing his back against an adobe wall.

He heard the beaded beans rattling, and a murmur arising in the cantina. He heard the words "El Cuchillo" and "Rojo Red" and "Panchita." He also heard "gringo" many times.

Then he became aware of the fact that he was not alone in this room. There was someone near him in the darkness, trying to keep down his breathing so that his location would not be given away. Johnny drew his gun, hunkered down on his heels and said:

"Okay, Rojo Red, turn up the light. And don't try any funny tricks or you'll never see your daughter again."

Only silence answered him.

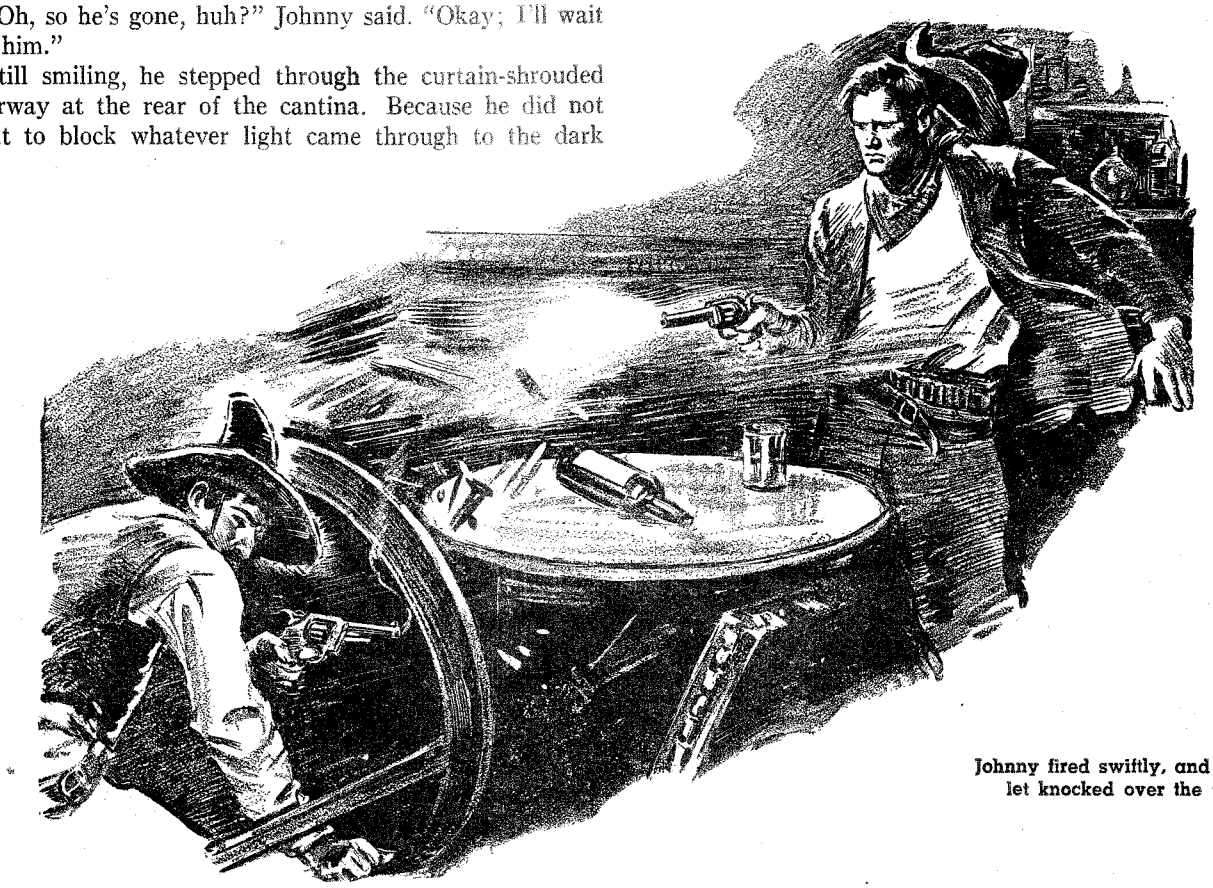
"I know you're in here, Rojo Red," Johnny said. "And I'm goin' to start shootin' in a second if you don't light up."

Now the talk in the cantina was so loud Johnny could not hear the slighter sounds. He glanced sidewise as the stringed beans rattled, felt a cool breath of air on his cheek. His eyeballs turned swiftly. He could see nothing in here but a yellow path on the floor, a dim table and some chairs, some rubbish. He thought he heard a scraping on the floor, the click of a door latch.

The son of a gun! He was running out! An open door had caused that breeze.

Johnny jumped to his feet, took one quick step forward. In that split second he knew he had been tricked. The barrel of a gun jabbed into his back.

JOHNNY dropped. The gun blasted, knocking off his hat, and Johnny whirled around. His six-shooter bucked twice, ejecting blue-orange pencils of flame. In the light of the blazing gunpowder he saw the man who had come up behind him. He saw that it was not Rojo Red, and that



Johnny fired swiftly, and his bullet knocked over the table

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he had hit him square in the chest. The man's fingers were splaying, dropping his gun. The man's jaw was falling, an expression of agonized pain on his dark face. Then the light was out again before the man collapsed, dead, and Johnny was momentarily blinded by the two bright jets.

Johnny swung on his toes, still close to the ground. He wished he had had sense enough to leave his spurs behind for they rattled every time he moved. He wished he had never come into this place, but had figured some way of getting Rojo Red to meet him outside.

The three shots had silenced the murmuring in the cantina. The sound of the body dropping brought a sigh. And now, in this dark room, Johnny distinguished the sharp, muffled gasps of a man. It was beyond him, close to the far wall. Whoever had skipped out had left behind him at least two gunmen to do the job where his nerve had failed.

Johnny took a chance. Waiting was making him jittery. "Rojo—"

Instantly his voice was answered.

A bullet hummed by, smashed into the wall with a dull *chunk*. Firing at the flame, Johnny shot swiftly. The bullet crashed into a leg of the table, splintering it and knocking the table over. Glass, bottles, a tin tray all clattered on the earth floor as Johnny's adversary shot back at him.

That gent could shoot. He put the bullet right through the heart of the spot where Johnny had been when he triggered.

In moving away, Johnny found himself beside the dead man. He lifted the body, groaned, dropped it with a noticeable thud. Then he held his breath and waited.

The man in the shadows did not shoot again, but his patience was running thin. Johnny could hear him shifting his position. Johnny heard him breathe convulsively, and by the creak of leather he knew that he was standing. Still, he waited.

Now the man was coming across the room, treading softly, and with each step he took, Johnny moved one farther from the body. Johnny got to the side wall before the man showed like a shadow beyond the lighted doorway. There the gunman hesitated, afraid to come into the open. Johnny held his fire though he could easily have picked him off. It was more important to him to know what was back of his reception than it was to pile up a neat stack of corpses.

After a while, the gunman moved closer to the light, staring at the spot where he had heard the body fall. Then he called something in Spanish. Talk in the cantina had dropped to nothing. It seemed to Johnny that the place was deserted except for himself and the gunman and the one he had killed.

The Mexican called again. Fearfully, the bartender came to the curtained doorway, parted the bean strings, poked a candle through, then his head.

Johnny said: "Just hoist yore hands real high, mister."

The bartender froze, candle-light glinting in his black eyes. The gunman, caught flat-footed, lifted his hands, let his six-shooter clatter to the ground. Johnny saw the man's hands moving back. But he was not to be caught twice by the same trick.

"Drop that knife!" he said. "That—uh—*cuchillo*."

With his left hand he went through the motions of taking a Bowie from a neck sheath. The gunman watched him like a cat, doing as Johnny had ordered. Then Johnny waved his gun at the bartender.

"Come inside, mister. You and yore friend back up against that wall!"

Terrified, the bartender followed the directions pointed out to him by Johnny's six-gun barrel. His eyes wavered. Johnny's traced them, and Johnny began to laugh.

"*Buenas noches*," Johnny greeted in newly learned Spanish. "*Buenas noches, Don Rojo Red.*"

Rojo Red answered with a malevolent glare. Rojo Red couldn't say a thing, for he was tied stoutly to a chair, and a hastily made gag was bound over his mouth. During the entire fight he had been in the middle of it, square in the center of the cross-fire.

JOHNNY'S back was to a wall; he was facing the two captives and could also watch the door to the cantina. There was a second door, he noticed, directly opposite the beaded one. There was also a window on that wall, giving onto darkness. Johnny guessed that the window looked out on a patio, rather than a street, but it did not make him feel any better. He had felt a breeze, heard that door close, and had good reasons to believe that one or more men who had been here when he arrived were now out there. They could pot him easily through the window.

Quickly, he stepped across the room, slashed the gag over Rojo Red's mouth and the ropes binding the big man to the chair. Then he moved back to the corner of the room where he was protected from the window and could keep his eyes on both doors. Rojo Red, as soon as he found his voice, began to cuss in a fancy mixture of Spanish, Americano, and Indio. Johnny stopped laughing at him.

"Cut it short, Rojo," he said, "and do some translatin' for me. Tell your barkeeper to tie up that mug and lay him on the floor. Then tell him to chase the boys out of the cantina. And don't try anything else, redhead, or it'll be the last time you'll ever jump a track."

The barkeeper looked somewhat relieved when Rojo Red spoke. Swiftly, he did the job demanded of him. While he was at it, Johnny asked Rojo Red:

"There was one other feller here, maybe two. These two hombres here look kinda familiar. Where did the other one go?"

"For El Cuchillo," Rojo Red said. "Yuh didn't think they were fetchin' Santy Claus?"

"Wouldn't be surprised," Johnny said. "Either of those two gents know English?"

"They won't need to know English," Rojo Red said bitterly, "when their pal brings El Cuchillo."

"They'll need to know how to pray," Johnny said, "if they pull any more knives or guns on me." The bartender had finished tieing the gunman, so Johnny took time to reload. "Your daughter ain't at the place you sent her to," he informed Rojo Red.

"I know that," Red said dismally. "These boys discovered she was gone. They were trying to find out where she was—and you, too—when you busted in. For the first time in my life I was telling them the truth, but they didn't believe me." Rojo Red had been stretching, to get back the use of his arms and legs. Now he got to his feet. "If you've hurt that little girl, I'll—"

"Cool off, mister!" Johnny snapped. "I came here to tell you where she was. On one condition—"

"Yeah?"

"You don't have any business mixing her in this kind of hell," Johnny said. "I'll tell you where she is providin' you'll get her across the Border immediately. If you've

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got no place to send her, you can ship her up to my folks."

Rojo Red said: "Okay, cowboy!"

"Then let's get out of here," Johnny suggested. "I don't want to say hello to El Cuchillo until Panchita's on her way to the States."

Rojo Red studied Johnny closely for a second, then strode stiffly toward the doorway. Johnny waited until he was almost there before following him. There was one place in that room where he could not watch both the doors and the window at once. There he hesitated a second until Rojo Red was in the doorway. Then he jumped across the open space.

Johnny heard the window crash, but he could do nothing about it because he was moving too rapidly. He heard the sharp bark of the gun.

Then the bullet smashed into his ribs, spinning him around like a top. He felt all the sensation going from his body in one mighty sweep. Then he was dropping, falling endlessly into nothingness.

CHAPTER V

VIVA VILLA

JOHNNY was still falling. He landed very hard and the jolt brought some consciousness back to him. It took quite a while before he realized that he had not landed in the room where he had started falling, but was some place else that was steamy hot, where the floor was filthy with half-rotten straw.

He turned over, and the wounded side sent sick, knife-like pains shooting through his head and body, whirled around in his stomach with the grip of nausea. He gritted his teeth until it felt as if he were biting sand. This steadied his nerves so that he could sit up.

Someone was talking. Johnny tried desperately to listen and failed because the buzzing in his ears made the words sound like gibberish. Then he discovered a most extraordinary thing. He thought he had fallen through a trapdoor and had just struck bottom. But the blood on his side was caked hard, and the high, tiny windows in this room were gray with daylight.

He closed his eyes and slept. . .

When he woke, the buzzing was gone from his ears, the film from his eyes. His side burned fearfully, and his stomach was one great bite of hunger. He became aware of the fact that he was not alone.

"Close your eyes," a voice snapped.

Johnny looked at a man with a month's beard on his chin, with a white, desperately thin face. He was also looking at Rojo Red with a bandage over his red head.

"Close your eyes," the bearded man hissed again. "If they see you're awake they'll take you out of here. You might never come back alive."

Johnny's eyes opened wider, then closed like a rabbit trap. It had taken all this time for him to realize that he was in a jail, a *cárcel,* and that Rojo Red and this bearded skeleton were locked up with him.

"And don't say nothin'," the bearded one said. "Wait'll it's dark and they don't know who's talkin' or who's awake."

But Johnny Tyne could not bear this blank silence. He opened his eyes again and said determinedly:

"The hell with them. They got nothin' on me. I'm goin' to holler for the judge and make them let me out."

The bearded man laughed, Rojo Red looked very sad. "They ain't got nothin' on you?" he said.

"It was self-defence," Johnny insisted. "Plain as daylight. They can't lock me up for that. The hombre I shot started it. I was just making a peaceful call on you."

The bearded one said: "That's absolutely right, Johnny. They can't lock you up for that. It's only a dream. You ain't really here."

Johnny had sense enough to know when he was being rawhided. He got the drift and shut up. Rojo Red, his pale blue eyes burning, asked:

"Panchita, Johnny Tyne, where is she?"

Johnny was really waking up now to the situation. He said:

"Gosh, Rojo Red, damned if I know. She came out to stop the little double-cross you and Don Miguel were rigging on me. Her horse ran away. I left her out there by the cactus patch when I come to fetch you. I was figuring on forgiving you for that doublecross if you'd take her across the Border." A bright light came to Johnny's eyes. "Say, is this mixed up with that revolution I heard about?"

Rojo Red was hardly relieved with Johnny's news. The bearded man said:

"It sure as hell is, and you're on the wrong side, Johnny." There was a touch of hysteria in his voice. "I'm on the wrong side, too. A hundred bucks a day, they promised me, in El Paso, and bullets for the old Hotchkiss. But when I found out what it was about, I started for home. This is as far as I got!" His grim face was ghostly. "They woulda shot me long ago only they figger on my changing my mind if I get enough of this hole. They need machine-gunners!" He ended with significant bitterness.

"But," Johnny said, "I don't even know what it's all about. I ain't on either team. I never even seen a machine gun."

"But you kicked El Cuchillo in the face, and he's one of *El Presidente's* men. You shot Pepe, and he's one of El Cuchillo's men," Rojo Red said. "We're all in the same boat."

"And it's been snagged," Johnny said. He smiled reminiscently. "When I was a kid, my old man took me down to Saint Louis once, down the Missouri. We were having a race with another feller when the *Saint Jo Belle* run up on a snag. It sunk quicker'n you could wink, and Pa swum ashore with me on his back. Then he licked me because I near choked him to death on the way."

Neither of them laughed at Johnny's story. There was a clanging of spurs outside, a rattle of Spanish. The machine-gunner said:

"It's six o'clock. They're changin' guards. In a couple of minutes we can all have a drink and forget that the boat's goin' down."

"Some jail," Johnny observed, "servin' six-o'clock drinks."

"You'll learn," the bearded man said. "Rojo Red and me had an agreement with the night guard. For ten times what it costs he'd bring a bottle now and then from Rojo's saloon. It's over there hid in the hay."

Johnny started to reach for it. Rojo Red hissed suddenly. Johnny froze. The heavy, mouldy oaken door was slowly opening, letting in a shaft of bright light. Then El Cuchillo loomed up there, and a couple of other men with rifles at ready.

El Cuchillo came into the filthy room and stood over Johnny Tyne.

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Johnny tried to duck, but the pain and the hunger had weakened and slowed him. El Cuchillo's heavy foot struck him full in the face, knocked him back so that his head hit the rock wall of the *cárcel.*

Johnny yelled, fighting mad. His fists clenched and he wove to his feet. Through a crimson mist he saw the big mouth of El Cuchillo laughing at him. But when he struck out, he instinctively knew that a six-week's-old baby could have done more damage. His knees were giving out under him.

El Cuchillo snapped Spanish orders.

Two of the men who had come with him took Johnny by the arms and dragged him out of there.

THEY took him to a big room where a strong light seared his eyes, where three judges in military uniforms sat behind a high bench. The judges yapped questions at him in Spanish and he stood there, not understanding anything, licking the salty blood that trickled down his lips.

El Cuchillo made a long-winded speech. A little man, sitting at a low desk beside the bench, made notes in a book.

The judges had more questions. The man Johnny had not shot the night before in the Cantina Infierno came into the room and told the judges something. Then four men brought in the body of the hombre Johnny had killed. He was covered with a dirty sheet. The judges looked underneath and nodded their heads. They pointed to the body and the center judge repeated the same sentence twice to Johnny.

Johnny only licked his lips. He knew these men were going to have him shot or hanged. He wasn't going to give them a bit of satisfaction.

El Cuchillo made another lecture, longer than the first, with a lot of resounding words and waving of his arms and grimaces. Johnny enjoyed this more than the first one. His head was clearing and he knew that it hurt El Cuchillo to talk, for he could see that his mouth was still swollen and his Adam's apple crushed from the battle of yesterday.

Johnny began to grin. One of the judges thundered at him, and he looked sober again. Then the three conferred. After a while they all stood up.

The middle one had a lot to say. When he was through, he spoke to the little gent who had ben making notes all along, and the note-maker stood up. It seemed to Johnny that there was a bit of sympathy in this hombre's eyes, and that El Cuchillo looked too pleased for the news to be anything but very bad. The little man cleared his throat.

"These military tribune," he said, "has make the decision. Don Johnny Tyne has admit the guilt with no force. Wan—spy. Two—coinciding with the *revolución.* T'ree —making the murder of wan Don Edwardo Sanchez. Four —injure of the body of wan Don Carlos Ibanez. Five—steal and hide Señorita Panchita Murphy."

As he rattled them off, Johnny's anger got the better of him.

"I didn't admit a damn thing," he shouted.

"Shot op," the little man said. He winked at Johnny, and Johnny subsided. The little man cleared his throat again. "These tribune has decide by the law to shoot these Johnny Tyne tomorrow at dawn. Maybe"— He shrugged —"they weel change their mind eef Johnny Tyne weel say where he hide Señorita Panchita Murphy."

Johnny said bitterly: "You tell them to go to hell."

The interpreter spoke to the judges in a soft voice, and Johnny knew immediately that he had not passed on his message. The judges nodded. El Cuchillo, his hand at his throat where Johnny's heel had smashed into him, stared at Johnny with narrow, satisfied eyes.

"She ees all," the little man said to Johnny.

Johnny felt that terrible anger sweeping through him again. He tried to break free of the two men holding him. He shouted:

"Vámonos infierno!"

And he never knew what were the results of his sparse Spanish, for the men were dragging him along the big room toward the stairs and the dungeon. At the head of the stairs El Cuchillo caught up. He kicked Johnny in the spine as the two men shoved, and Johnny went rolling down to come up with a crash against the old oak door.

THE first thing Johnny said to his two prison mates was: "Well, they ain't found Panchita yet."

Tears came to Rojo Red's eyes. "Thank God for that!"

"Say," Johnny asked, "why didn't you tell me your name was Murphy? I wouldn't have gotten into all this trouble if I'd know that. I got sense enough to know that when a Mick starts fightin' he don't quit until the end of the battle. You never would of taken Panchita out of here."

"I don't know," Rojo Red said.

Johnny felt as if he had been through a rock crusher, and he wanted to sleep. But he only had about ten more hours of this world, ten hours that seemed suddenly precious to him. He was going to die five times tomorrow, according to that half-pint interpreter. Once for spying. A second time for being mixed up with the wrong end of a revolution. It might make things easier, he thought, if he only knew what he was dying for. It was like that cussing he had given the judges. Fighting back, or knowing that you were dying for a good cause, gave purpose to an otherwise meaningless life and death.

"They're going to shoot me five times tomorrow," Johnny boasted. "So I told them to go to hell. I said, *Vámanos infierno.* Some Spanish, huh?"

The machine-gunner saw humor in it.

"Your Spanish is lousy. You said, 'Let's go hell'."

Johnny was beginning to laugh. Dying five times was starting to look funny to him. The machine-gunner dug his bottle out from under some mouldy straw and uncorked it, handing it to Johnny.

"Take a snort," he said, "and quit worrying. There's no telling what might happen by tomorrow."

Johnny drank. It eased his nerves. *"Mañana,* that's some more Mexican I learned. Your pal Don Miguel who Panchita calls Mike, taught me that. Also *queen savvy.* He likes to say, 'Who knows what's going to happen tomorrow'."

"Yeah. *Quien sabe?"* Rojo Red was beginning to look hopeful. He had been in this country so long, tomorrow always looked better to him than today. "Maybe Pancho Villa will show up. I heard he had his army together and was riding toward Chihuahua."

Johnny said: "He's only a bandit. I though this was a revolution."

"It is," the machine-gunner said. "That's what I found out when I came down here. That's why I tried to swap sides and landed in this jug. The president was a big hero, once. He fought under Juarez, helped take this country away from Maximilian. Then he took it away from the people. They went to get back their land, and, when I get out of here, I'm going to help them."

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Johnny took another drink. He was beginning to feel resigned to *mañana*. He said slowly:

"This country is upside down. It's crazy. Up home they say Villa is a bandit trying to steal the country from its owners. They even talk of sending down the American Army to stop him.

"I heard that, too," the machine-gunner said. "And I guess the Spaniards called Bolivar a bandit, and the English said the same of George Washington." He took the bottle from Johnny, raised it high in the dark cell.

"*Viva* Villa!" he shouted.

Johnny could hardly see him in the gloom, and he wondered about him. He wondered how a man could be hard-boiled enough to hire out as a professional killer, then be tender enough to swap in the middle to fight for what he thought was right.

The machine-gunner passed the bottle to Rojo Red. Rojo lifted it, whispered hoarsely: "*Viva* Villa!"

It was Johnny's turn. Yeah, tomorrow he was going to be shot on five different counts, all five frames and lies against which he had not been allowed to defend himself. It was just about time the people took back this country from such a bunch of cutthroats.

"*Viva* Villa!" Johnny said.

IT WAS dawn, and the guard had come for him—six soldiers, stiff as ramrods. A priest came with them and went through his business, and Johnny, though he had never been to church in his life, felt a lot better. Johnny was ready.

"So long," he said to his two cellmates.

"Be seein' yuh," the machine-gunner answered.

Rojo Red added: "I'll write a letter to your folks, Johnny. I'll tell 'em—uh—about my daughter. You saved Panchita from worse than you know."

This didn't make much sense to Johnny. He hadn't saved her from anything. He had tried to, but had been caught. Whatever saving had been done, she had done herself. So he said: "Thanks, Rojo Red. Don't lay it on too thick." The guards were prodding him now. "Well—uh—" He stumbled, grinning. "So long, boys."

Johnny went up the stairs at a slow pace. They walked out into the big courtyard of this building and, though the sun was hardly over the mountains, the white glare made Johnny nearly close his eyes. He heard a drum and a bugle that didn't mean much to him; nor did the crowd, packing the place, enter into his consciousness. The first thing that he really noticed was a wall he was made to face, an adobe wall, pitted in many places with rifle bullets. Evidently, Johnny thought, these hombres had had a lot of practice at this sort of thing.

One of the guards prodded him around facing the crowd. There were six soldiers there, holding rifle butts to the ground. El Cuchillo was with them, looking very happy. He had gotten a sword somewhere and was holding it so that the sun flashed along its entire length.

Johnny wondered if he could get to El Cuchillo and kill him before those sleepy-looking soldiers in the firing squad woke up. He measured the distance, gave up the idea. These guys were having fun enough without Johnny adding any more to the show than he had to.

Then Johnny saw something else that made him laugh. Behind El Cuchillo was a black hearse, drawn by two black horses. and the horses were branded with the Box T. It was so funny, he laughed until the tears came to his eyes. Wouldn't he give a lot if Rojo Red could see this and could write about it in the letter to Johnny's old man! Wouldn't that hand Pop a jolt for kicking Johnny off the home ranch. Shot as a spy and toted off in a hearse drawn by Box T horses.

A hearse drawn by Box T horses and—and that wasn't all, by golly!

Johnny blinked, stared. Sitting on that hearse, his white teeth bared in a big smile, was Don Miguel. That's right! Johnny was certain it was Don Miguel up there beside the driver, grinning like a wolf, the dirty, doublecrossing son of a coyote. He couldn't stay home when something like this was going on—not Don Miguel.

Well, it takes all kinds of people to make a world. Forget about it. . . .

Johnny tried to pay attention to the day's business, but Don Miguel and that hearse kept distracting him. Now El Cuchillo was yapping something, talking to Johnny who wasn't listening; and someone poked Johnny in the ribs. It was that little gent who had taken the notes and done the translating at the trial.

"Listen now," he said, "or maybe they shoot before you are ready."

"I been ready a long time," Johnny said. "Tell' em to shoot and get it over with."

"They have to talk first," the little man said. "Now listen."

Johnny looked at El Cuchillo who cleared his throat and talked some more. The little man translated in a muted voice.

"Don't look surprise. He says you are bad man and will be shot. He is always right. So, when they shoot, fall down on your face and don't move."

Johnny said: "Huh?"

The little man was listening to El Cuchillo. He told Johnny what had been said:

"He ask do you have a last word?"

Johnny said: "What did you think I was going to do when they shoot me? Sprout wings and fly?"

The little man spoke to El Cuchillo. El Cuchillo came forward with a blindfold. Johnny snapped:

"Tell that goat to keep his bandana. Tell him I'll bet him an *Americano* dollar he can't look into my eyes when he gives the order to shoot."

The little man translated rapidly. El Cuchillo glared at Johnny, swung on his heel and strode back to his firing squad. There, he raised his sword and shouted. The squad came to attention, lifted their rifles to their shoulders, and Johnny was staring down the six black barrels.

The little guy whispered: "Fall front!"

He turned away suddenly and ran while Johnny stared after him. Then Johnny turned his head. He concentrated in staring straight into the eyes of El Cuchillo. El Cuchillo's gaze dropped. He shouted, brought down his sword snappily. Six eyes peered over their sights at Johnny, and six fingers tightened on their triggers. Six rifles spat flame and lead, followed by a rattling roar, and Johnny thought that this was a remarkably painless way in which to die.

So far, anyhow.

His eyes snapped open, closed. He remembered, in his amazement, the advice of that little hombre who had run away. Gasping, Johnny clutched at his heart, fell back against the adobe wall, then bent in the middle. He rolled over on his face in the dust and lay still, waiting for the pain of the bullets to start throbbing.

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CHAPTER VI

THE SIX-GUN HEARSE

HOW long he lay there he did not know. After a while someone came up, took his wrist as if feeling his pulse and said:

"Es muerto."

There was the beat of drums, the vibration through the earth of marching. Wheels crunched. Hoofs drew near, and another man was kneeling beside Johnny, spreading a sheet over him.

"Don't move," was whispered to him in English. "It's Mike. I bought the right to bury you—so for God's sake, don't move."

Heaven, Johnny thought, was a funnier place than Mexico.

He lay there unmoving while someone took his feet and someone else took his wrists and lifted him from the ground. He felt himself being carried, hoisted high, and dropped on something hard. He was dragged along for a couple of feet. A door closed and he began to wonder if this was heaven after all when a soft, cool hand touched his forehead and a woman's voice sobbed:

"Thank God! Lie still, Johnny. You're not hurt?"

The hand pulled away the sheet from his face. Johnny blinked. He was looking straight into the blue eyes of Panchita Murphy.

"So they got you, too," he said.

Panchita was frightened. A finger to her lips signaled for silence. Someone yelled, "Giddap" to the Box T horses and the hearse rumbled along noisily. Panchita leaned very close to Johnny and kissed him. She was crying.

"Mike bought the firing squad. You're not dead, Johnny. You're alive. But wait until we get out of here. They don't know I'm here. I mean, El Cuchillo. Mike does, and the undertaker, and that little interpreter. That was beautiful, Johnny Tyne, not taking the blindfold. El Cuchillo couldn't look into your eyes. He didn't see that the bullets all missed."

Johnny wanted to sit up and howl. The girl's hand on his forehead kept him still. One of her tears splashed on his cheek, and he tasted the warm saltiness of it.

"Lie still, Johnny Tyne."

On the driver's seat, the two men were whispering. Don Miguel suddenly said over his shoulder:

"Get out those guns, Panchita. Give one to Johnny. Pass me a couple."

"What's the matter?"

Johnny shook off the sheet. He got to his knees, balancing himself in the dark, swaying hearse. Panchita was dragging automatic rifles from under another white sheet. She gave one to Johnny, handed a couple of six-shooters up to Don Miguel who placed them between his back and the seat. Don Miguel said:

"He's found out. El Cuchillo. He's over there looking for blood!"

The driver whipped up the horses. El Cuchillo was howling. Johnny snapped:

"Just give me one crack at that skunk!"

He pushed his way past the girl, knocked open the rear panel of the hearse and looked out over the rifle sights. Where the execution had taken place, El Cuchillo was shouting, waving that bright sword. Three soldiers had started running toward the hearse. The crowd that had come to see Johnny killed were screaming, piled up like sheep against the far exit of the courtyard, scrambling over one another in a frenzy to escape.

Johnny steadied the gun and pulled the trigger. He knew without looking that he had missed the big Mexican. The jolting of the wagon had knocked out his aim.

Now Panchita was with him, lying on the floor of the hearse, bracing her rifle by spreading her elbows on a shroud. Up on the front seat, Don Miguel had begun to yell.

"They closed the gate! "

Someone beyond was shouting:

"Alto—alto!"

Johnny aimed again. He saw El Cuchillo's big sombrero leap up, turn over while the man froze there stupidly. Once more—he wanted just one more shot before they got him.

But the driver yanked on the brakes, bringing the wagon to a grinding halt. A bullet snipped through the black side of the hearse. The sudden stop knocked Johnny over. When he got back to his knees El Cuchillo had vanished, and a dozen or more soldiers were advancing, firing through the courtyard.

"They're *El Presidente's* men," Panchita whispered. "El Cuchillo's, too. They're closing in in front, too."

Johnny knew that, for bullets were coming from all directions now. He glanced around through the gunsmoke and saw that they were near a building that looked vaguely familiar.

"Say," he asked, "isn't this the court? Isn't the jail in there?"

"Yes," the girl said, "but—"

"Then grab all the rest of the guns and come with me!"

Johnny jumped out the back of the hearse. On solid ground, he could really shoot now. He stopped the charge for a second, until Panchita had joined him. Then, with her in the lead, they ran hard for the door of the *cárcel.*

DON MIGUEL followed. The driver was slumped on the seat of the hearse. He had taken his last ride in that ancient wagon he had driven for so many years, and the two big horses, driven wild by the shooting, were kicking themselves out of the traces.

Johnny clubbed down a guard who came through the foyer, and took away his rifle. Inside the doorway, the three halted. Johnny Tyne ordered crisply:

"Keep 'em back, Mike. Rojo Red's downstairs, and a couple other guys. I'll be back in a second."

He swung on his heels. Backing toward him was the little interpreter, shooting with an old Colt revolver. Johnny shouted:

"Stick to it, Shorty!"

He had forgotten his wounds and his pains, the fact that today was the day he had been slated for the firing squad. The interpreter shouted:

"Viva Villa!"

And Johnny answered him as he ran toward the stairway leading down to the dungeons. At the head of the stairs a guard shot point blank for Johnny, but Johnny had seen him first and had ducked down. He came up, slugging with the butt of his rifle, taking the man in the chin and knocking him rolling, clattering down the steps.

Before the man could find his feet, Johnny was on top of him, clubbing him down again, kicking his rifle out of reach. Then Johnny was on his knees, firing down the long corridor at a third guard who had taken refuge around a corner.

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Up above, the blast of guns was racketing around the halls. Outside, by the sounds, Johnny guessed that El Cuchillo's men searched for cover and were sniping at the tiny party in the doorway to the courthouse. Down here, the third guard poked his rifle around the corner and Johnny plugged him dead center.

"*Viva* Villa!" Johnny let go with his new war-cry.

Up and down the corridor, the prisoners answered and kicked at their great oaken doors. The din was terrific as Johnny Tyne hurried through the guards' pockets, searching for keys that he never found. He stood there for a second, uncertainly, looking around him in the murk. Then he went back to the cell where he had been prisoner for a day. He took the dead guard's rifle, slung the bandolier over his shoulder.

"Hey, Rojo Red, get away from the door!" he shouted.

There was no answer from Rojo Red—or if there was, the racket and the cheering drowned it out. Johnny shouted again. He couldn't wait. It was hopeless to think that the three upstairs could hold back the army forever. Johnny held the muzzle of the gun an inch from the door's lock. He bit his lip as he fired twice. Then he put his shoulder to the oak, and the shattered lock gave way.

Johnny tumbled in, landed on his hands and knees in the filthy straw. A big hand grabbed his shoulder, hauled him to his feet, and Rojo Red kissed him.

"Johnny! *Madre de Dios!* Did Pancho Villa . . . ?"

Johnny started to grin. He had forgotten how sick he was. He had forgotten that wound that was a dull throb in his side, and the beating he had taken. He had forgotten all these things until now, and the cell was whirling around him as if he were just awakening from a drunken dream.

"Hell," Johnny said, "I don't know where this Villa is. Mike bought me. Mike bought off the shooting squad and the sawbones. But they found out. Villa, I guess he's still up in the mountains. I dunno. But Mike's upstairs—and Panchita. They got guns. Bust out the rest of these guys."

The soldier of fortune snapped out of it first. He ran out of there. Johnny heard him blasting down the doors to the rest of the cells. Then Rojo Red went through the door like a shot.

Johnny was so dizzy he could hardly keep his feet. The roar of "*Viva* Villa" was sweeping through the place, along the corridors as gaunt, bearded men came through broken oak doors. There were *Americanos* here and Spaniards. *Indios*—and the short, hungry, patient *peones* who were ready to die for a handful of earth.

Johnny shook his head to clear it, and followed them.

MEN guarding the windows, men on the roof sniping at El Cuchillo's boys. The interpreter and the machine-gunner, whose name Johnny never would know, were herding an army officer through the big courtroom. Kneeling, firing at everything that moved, were Panchita and Rojo Red and Don Miguel.

Johnny stumbled toward them. He felt a lift when he saw that Don Miguel could still laugh and that the others were smiling.

Don Miguel was saying: "It was a hard bargain your Panchita drove, Rojo Red."

His rifle bucked. He kept his eyes on the sights though he talked as if he were at some party in his big, fine hacienda.

"For her hand in marriage," Don Miguel went on, "I must give away my *rancho* to that *pícaro*, that *infiel cochino*, Pablo. I must give it to him so that Pablo can bribe the firing squad and the *médico*."

"I told you he was one of El Cuchillo's men," Rojo Red said, punctuating his sentence with a gun blast.

They were so busy they had not noticed Johnny standing there groggily, and Johnny felt suddenly out of place.

Rojo Red said: "Pete and that little shaver, Alfredo, have *el coronel* by the ears. He knows where there's more ammunition. Enough to hold us over—guns too—until tonight maybe." Rojo Red grunted. "There goes another one," he said. "Knocked him right off the wall."

Then Panchita spoke, her voice ringing with hope. "I heard that Villa is riding toward Chihuahua. Maybe he'll come this way."

"Yeah," her father agreed. "Maybe he will!"

Johnny backed away from there. Chihuahua, he knew where Chihuahua was, and it was a long way from here. He knew that Rojo Red was talking to hold up his daughter's courage.

In the hallway, he found some stairs going up, and he pulled himself along by the handrails. At the top, he was surprised to find himself on the roof, out in the open, on top of the wide, low building. Here the sun shone brightly, and the cathedral was a great pile of intricate masonry before him. The streets and plaza were deserted, the courtyard was empty of men except for the bodies of two or three in the dust. But all around hidden rifles sniped from roof tops.

A bullet screaming past his head reminded Johnny that he was not in Sunday School. He sat down abruptly, protected by the escarpment around the building, and tried to remember what he had come up here for.

Oh, yes, that was it, Pancho Villa. He had come up here to fetch Pancho Villa and his ragged army. Somebody had to fetch Pancho Villa, or little Panchita would never live through this, nor would Don Miguel who had sold everything and risked his skin to save the life of Johnny Tyne. And the bearded machine-gunner who had discovered a cause below the Border, and the half-pint interpreter who had told Johnny how to die. They would not live either.

Johnny rolled over to his hands and knees and crawled along the roof, keeping close to the low wall. He had heard the cry of a horse down there in the courtyard, a horse who had been mortally wounded. But when he got to the far end of the roof, he pulled himself up, looked over the edge quickly, and ducked back while sudden lead chewed at the limestone where his head had been.

One of those horses was dead. The other who had been attached to the hearse was apparently alive and unharmed. He had broken away from the wagon, and with the traces still dangling at his heels, had backed into a corner between the wall and the building.

Johnny again stuck up his head. The gate at the far end of the courtyard was still open. The mob that had jammed it was gone. With a little bit of luck he might be able to get through it.

He took a deep breath. The dizziness had become only a vague thing in him as he braced his hands on the shallow wall edging the roof. Then he vaulted over, to land square on the back of the frightened horse.

He gripped the horse with his knees, jabbed in the spurs. And the big animal went like a cannonball across the courtyard.

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Johnny leaped and dragged El Cuchillo from his horse

CHAPTER VII

REVOLUTION!

JOHNNY knew that bullets were humming past him, but they left him strangely unmoved. He had been executed once today, and reckoned that was enough for any man in any single twenty-four hours, period. He also felt he was being backed by a power more potent than guns, and that it would take him through.

As the horse ripped through the dust, he heard Panchita cry:

"*Viva* Johnny Tyne!"

She, too, knew that he would get away. "*Viva* Villa!" he shouted.

Johnny had found the broken reins by the time they reached the gateway, and he slapped the horse around to head him down the street with the traces snapping like firecrackers beneath him. Without looking back, Johnny knew that someone had gotten a horse to chase him. But this did not bother him either, for he was aboard a Box T mount, a friend of his called Charlie, a son of gallant old Bessie.

It would take another Box T horse to catch him.

"Git goin'. Charlie," he begged, lying low across the horse's withers. "Show 'em what you got."

Charlie, who had heard only Spanish for weeks, liked the familiar ring of American and the sound of his own boss's voice, so he put more power into his long legs as they thundered past the ancient cathedral and plaza. He picked up speed when they pounded by the familiar smell of the Cantina Infierno. And, in the open country he was still running like a thoroughbred.

Now Johnny glanced behind. There was only one rider on his tail, coming along fast. He was still far enough behind so that Johnny had no immediate worry about his guns. It was still possible that Johnny might outrun him. But the cowboy began casting about, wondering what he would do if Charlie failed him. He had a bandolier of cartridges around his shoulder—but no gun. And he did not have the slightest idea where to find Pancho Villa.

"Just keep on rollin', Charlie," Johnny whispered to his horse.

The crackling of traces was beginning to terrify Charlie, making him run crazily all over the road. Johnny leaned down, unhooked the breeching stay and backstrap, slipped the buckles holding the traces to the saddle-piece and belly-band, and let the crupper and all slide down over Charlie's tail. This made Charlie hardly any happier because the collar, freed from the rest, began to jump around on his neck.

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Johnny steadied it with a hand on the hame because there was no way he could figure to slip off the collar without stopping.

Another two miles, with Charlie getting worse all the way. He was breaking pace more often now, and it would not be long before Johnny was overtaken. He glanced back; the pursuit was slowly closing in Johnny's advantage. He had to take the chance that he could stop, throw off the collar, and get going again before the man caught up.

Johnny drew in, worked swiftly. The pursuer halted, too, lifted a rifle. On a running horse, he would have missed by a hundred yards. But he was steady now, with a standing target; the bullet whistled by, just nipping the tip of Charlie's ear. The horse screamed, leaped high in the air. Charlie had gone loco.

After that, Johnny was too busy for a while trying to stay on the back of his mount to worry particularly about the end. That was El Cuchillo back there; Johnny was certain of it. It was the man who had ordered his execution, only to discover that the corpse had failed to bleed. El Cuchillo, Johnny reckoned, would see to it this time that his victim was surrounded with a big red puddle.

Johnny's teeth clacked as Charlie sunfished. Charlie whirled around, ducking his head to shake the collar over his ears, and it seemed to Johnny that he was on a pivot spinning like a merry-go-round gone wild. Several seconds passed after the horse finally quieted down before Johnny realized that the bucking had stopped. But Charlie had not entirely quit. His hoofs were spread as he tried to bite away the harness that had plagued him.

Johnny grinned broadly at El Cuchillo who sat another Box T horse, holding a brace of Colts on the man he had caught.

"Buenas noches," Johnny said. "If I'd been in a rodeo, I'd of made ten bucks off that ride."

El Cuchillo had no smile for Johnny Tyne. He had overtaken his man. He was determined to leave him there for the buzzards.

Johnny was searching for an opening that wasn't there. Those two six-shooters had not been bought off. This time El Cuchillo was going to be mighty sure that Johnny Tyne be properly executed for the insult of that kick in the face.

He spoke to Johnny and, though Johnny did not understand a word of the beautiful, sinister-sounding language, he knew exactly what El Cuchillo was talking about. He raised his hands shoulder high and said:

"Okay—shoot and be damned!"

El Cuchillo cursed.

Johnny jabbed the spurs into Charlie's ribs, and fell flat against Charlie's neck. The horse quivered, reared, leaped toward El Cuchillo. El Cuchillo's guns spoke, smashing lead into Charlie's collar, into Charlie's head. Then Charlie was falling, his forefeet over the back of El Cuchillo's mount who was trying to crowhop away.

Johnny instinctively saw that there was only one thing to do: he had to drag this hombre out of the saddle.

As Charlie dropped, Johnny reached from underneath and got a grip on the throat of El Cuchillo's fancy charro jacket. El Cuchillo, fighting down a crazy horse between his legs and a wild man on his neck, could not immediately bring his guns into effective play. While he had the chance, Johnny took it. Doubling up, he swung a foot to a goad El Cuchillo's horse. The mount screamed, broke free of Charlie's weight, jumped up and over while El Cuchillo tumbled backward out of the saddle.

Johnny and El Cuchillo landed hard, Johnny on the bottom. El Cuchillo had him by the throat now, pinning him helpless in the dust. His right hand was swinging up, gripping a Colt, to bash in Johnny's head.

Then Johnny remembered something. When El Cuchillo's right hand started down with that six-shooter, Johnny squirmed around, trying to get his head out of the way. At the same time, he reached for the back of El Cuchillo's bull neck.

His fingers closed on the knife sheathed there. He pulled it from oiled leather, jabbed short and hard. A spasm went through El Cuchillo. The gun slipped from his fingers, and he collapsed on top of Johnny Tyne.

Johnny, for a while, lay as still as he had following the execution. When the strength had come back to him, he rolled El Cuchillo over and dragged him to the side of the road.

JOHNNY'S mind was a blank sometimes, then it would be as clear as a Montana mountain pool. When it was clear, he would say to himself, over and over again:

"I gotta find Pancho Villa. I gotta go to Chihuahua."

Through the hot noon, he rode, and during the hours when sensible Mexicans take their siesta in the shade. He fell asleep in the brilliantly silver-mounted saddle of El Cuchillo, to waken again with a Mexican shaking him by the belt.

"Pancho Villa?" Johnny gasped.

The Mexican shook his head. He pointed to the west, and Johnny rode on. He rode until the sun squatted on the purple peaks and a great crimson dust-cloud blocked his way.

There, by a shallow stream, a couple of vaqueros rode up to him, rifles ready under their arms, dark eyes suspicious.

"Pancho Villa?" he asked.

They conferred, wheeled their horses and, one on each side, led Johnny on into that big, red cloud that was made of dust raised by the hoofs of many horses. Vaguely, Johnny saw that he had come to a camp; that there were women here and kids; and dark-faced, raggedly-dressed men carrying guns. Then he was facing a big, heavy man with laughter in his eyes, with two bandoliers crossed over his big stomach. A lean American with drooping blond mustaches stood beside him.

"My God!" the American gasped. "Where'd you come from, cowboy?"

"From Hell," Johnny said. "From Infierno. Rojo Red and Panchita and Don Miguel—they're fighting in the plaza. El Cuchillo—he's dead. But they need help. I've come from Hell, mister, and I'm headed back."

The American translated for Pancho Villa, then added a piece of advice of his own.

"Let us take care of this, cowboy. You need food and sleep. We'll attend to Infierno. When we come back, you can go on with us to Ciuadad Juárez."

Johnny thanked him. Big, burly Pancho thanked Johnny. The guerilla chief rounded up a band of horses, the fastest, and his best men, and thundered off to the south, with the men singing *La Cucuracha* as if it were their song of freedom.

There were all kinds of men in that army, cabalerros and peons, old-time bandits and many cowboys from the great state of Chihuahua. There were women, kids, too. This army was an army of the people.

Johnny clung to the bright silver saddlehorn. He did

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not know that he had become delirious. He only knew that he had done the job he had set out to do and that now he had to find old Bessie and go home to Montana where he could sleep forever. He turned his back on the camp and rode away.

He came to a crossroads that was vaguely familiar under the half-full moon, a rutted path that he had seen before near a field of ghostly maguay cactus. He came to a gate and a grove of trees, to a couple of big buildings that smelled very sour. He rode by many small adobe huts and a bunch of Mexicans who peered at him, frightened and curious in the night.

"*Viva* Villa!"

They took up the cry. Johnny laughed hysterically.

"We got to find Bessie!" he yelled. "*Vámonos!*"

The little men charged past him. They ran faster than Johnny's tired horse could go, charging up on Don Miguel's fine home. And there it was that Johnny's delirium had a moment of brilliance followed by a darkness blacker than night.

He saw Pablo, whimpering like a beaten dog, screaming, while brown, hard hands dragged him through marble halls. Then a great whirlpool swallowed up Johnny Tyne, and these pictures, which had been more like a dream than things he had actually seen, vanished into nothingness.

JOHNNY thought he was in that hearse again. The same cool hand was on his forehead, the same white sheet drawn up to his chin. There was a difference, however. They had put a mattress in the bottom of the hearse, and the wheels were not rolling.

When Johnny opened his eyes he saw the golden hair of Panchita Murphy above him. Then her cheek was close to his and he knew that he must be dreaming.

"Oh, Johnny—Johnny Tyne!" she whispered.

Johnny went to sleep. Panchita was still there when he woke again. She smiled down on him. She brought hot soup that hurt his stomach when he swallowed it, but he knew it was good, because it turned his dreams into real life. He was in a room, he discovered, not in a hearse. The sun was shining.

"Everybody get out okay?" he asked.

"Papa and Don Miguel—" Panchita's eyese were darkened with sadness. "They're riding to Ciuadad Juárez with Pancho Villa. The revolution has come."

Yeah, Johnny thought, he'd go, too. There were kids in that army, women, men like Don Miguel who had always lived high; there were people like that bearded machine-gunner who would fight for a cause that was not his own.

"Me," Johnny said, "I'm going with them."

Determinedly, Panchita shook her head. "No, Johnny, this is not your war; it is not for *Americanos*. It is for men like Mike and Papa and Pancho Villa, for the millions who have been starved and enslaved. And there are plenty of them, Johnny, to win."

She added, blushing: "Besides—well, you have to think of Bessie. She must be wonderful. You can't leave Bessie."

"Where is she?" Johnny asked eagerly.

The girl's lovely face went blank.

"I don't know!" She became indignant. "How would I know? Isn't she in Montana? Why would I know where your sweetheart is?"

Johnny laughed; he laughed so hard it exhausted him.

Panchita was really indignant now. "All you've talked about for a week was this Bessie. While I—I—"

That girl must like him, Johnny thought, to work herself up like this. And he liked her, too. It was a real pity she was going to marry Don Miguel, this hombre she called Mike, who was the best guy in the world just the same. Yeah, it was a shame.

"Gosh," he said. "You got to forgive me for talking so much about Bessie. She's my sweetheart, all right, the only one I got. But neither of us ever thought of getting married. She's had too many husbands already. Yeah, Bessie's my old mare—the one El Cuchillo kicked."

"Why, Johnny!" the girl cried. "Bessie—she's in the stable. Why, I—"

She was all mixed up. Maybe that was why she started kissing Johnny Tyne.

* * *

So down there in old Chihuahua, in the Cantina Infierno, Rojo Red swears by both his names that he'll plug that gringo on sight for kidnapping his daughter while he was busy winning the revolution. At the same time Rojo Red will show snapshots of his grandsons. Rojo Red will expand his chest as he boasts:

"Look more an' more like their gran'pa every day, don't they? Ain't got a bit of that kidnappin' gringo in them, have they? Well, maybe the one called Mike has some, maybe."

At the same time, Don Miguel Kelly y Alvarez, who is now *el capitán*, will tell how he was out-traded.

"He left a note swapping all his horses for Panchita," he says. "They were damn good horses. But I was robbed. I already had them."

"And he already had Panchita," Rojo Red reminds him. "Wait'll I get my hands on that kidnappin' gringo son-in-law of mine."

THE END

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Seven Mile House

Gun in hand, Julie stole toward the dead man

By Max Brand

Start now this absorbing novel of mystery and strange terror under the desert sun

IT BEGINS with the wounded dog. SAMUEL KENNEDY finds him in a desert canyon, a big gray police dog, shot and left for dead. But there is still life in him, and after Kennedy has given him water and released him from the place where he is trapped, the dog starts out with a purpose—and leads Kennedy to a dead man.

This man has been killed by a rockslide and buried in a shallow, hurried grave, which the police dog quickly uncovers. Examining the body, Kennedy finds only one possible clue—a kind of fuzzy thread adhering to the head wound.

STILL guided by the dog, Kennedy soon reaches a desert inn called Seven Mile House. This remote and expensive retreat is managed by a good-looking young woman named JULIE VERNON. Kennedy tells her about his discovery up in the canyon, and the dead man is brought in and identified: He is one WILLIAM HARRISON, a mining promoter and ex-lawyer who had his headquarters in a neighboring village. He had come to Seven Mile house five days before. What particularly interests Kennedy is the odd behavior of Julie Vernon in connection with the dead man. "Fear of more than death," is the way he describes it to himself.

It is established that William Harrison was killed by the rockslide, which was heard by the guests at Seven Mile House. But Samuel Kennedy believes this slide to have been deliberately engineered; and so he proceeds to investigate the various inmates of the desert hotel.

FOUR of them interest him especially, for any of these could have slipped up to the canyon that evening and started the slide. There is ALEXANDER MACDONALD, a genial and pleasant engineer, whom Kennedy suspects simply because his appearance is so innocent. There is CAMILLA CUYAS, an exotic and moody Spanish refugee, who had been much in the company of the dead man Harrison. There is DANIEL FARGO, writer and former cattleman—very much in love with Julie Vernon; and there is Julie herself. The fact that Harrison was decidedly a lady's man, attentive to both Julie and Camilla, makes jealousy a possible motive behind the murder.

Samuel Kennedy has the idea that some one of the Seven Mile house people owns the big police dog, and so he takes the animal to a pre-dinner gathering. But the experiment is a failure; the only person the dog will pay any attention to is Camilla Cuyas who speaks to it in Spanish; and she insists that she has never seen the animal before. Kennedy believes that the dog's owner was in the room and that he or she gave it a secret command to prevent identification.

About all Kennedy has accomplished has been to earn the dislike of virtually everyone at Seven Mile House. Julie Vernon, who has been hostile from the bginning, tells him that he must leave the next day; and he finds Camilla Cuyas watching him with almost frightening malice. . . .

This story began in last week's Argosy

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CHAPTER V

MY HOBBY IS MURDER

DINNER would have been a difficult thing for Kennedy to sit through if an ordinary type of man had been inside his skin—so many hostile eyes were on him. But even this hostility was something for him to observe and to study. Above all, Julie Vernon, her man Fargo, and Camilla Cuyas had no use for him. Fargo, his head high, his eyes challenging, seemed ready to break out at him at the first opportunity. No one talked to him except Macdonald. Kennedy was grateful.

Macdonald said. "What do you do with yourself in the world, Mr. Kennedy?"

"What would you say?" asked Kennedy.

"I'm no judge," said Macdonald. "What do *other* people say about you?"

"They say that I've studied too many things and know too little about any of them, geology, or ornithology, or architecture, or history. As a matter of fact, they accuse me of taking more leisure than I can afford. I haven't anything that would rate as a passion, except travel and detective stories."

One or two people smiled. No one laughted.

"Maybe he's been in your Italy, Mr. Macdonald," asked Dr. Goeffrey Lewis.

"Oh, yes," said Kennedy. "I brought away a part of it, too."

"Oh, you did? What part?" asked Mrs. Lancaster.

"All I could carry in my head," said Kennedy.

"Oh, is *that* all!" said Mrs. Lancaster, relaxing. "What does *that* amount to?"

"A lot of things," said Kennedy, with his smile. "The curve of a gondola's prow, and the gondolier's voice bellowing at the corner of a canal. Dante's house in Florence, a crooked street behind the market, rain over the Campagna, pigeons in Siena, a wine shop in Ostia, a magnolia tree blooming at Como, and Judas kissing Christ in Padua."

"I thought you might be a collector," said Macdonald.

"Oh, I am," said Kennedy in his gentle voice. "I collect all sorts of things that don't have to go into trunks. There's no use packing and unpacking all the time. And as the play says, in the end you can't take it with you."

"I see," said Camilla Cuyas, in a voice as dry as her smile was bright. "A moral philosopher, Mr. Kennedy?"

"Not at all," said Kennedy.

"I got to Italy once myself, on a cattle boat," said Fargo. "But all I found there was sour wine and headaches. Anyway, I learned enough of the lingo to ask my way around but I never found what Kennedy saw."

"And what are you interested in mostly now?" asked Julie Vernon, absently.

"Murder," said Kennedy.

HE HAD hoped to find some sharp reaction and he found it indeed. Each of his suspects started violently, but so did everyone else at the table. "In a story I've been reading," he added.

"Speaking of landslides . . ." began the doctor.

"Oh, but who is?" said Mrs. Lancaster. "Oh, let's *not* speak of them."

"I was wondering about mining accidents," said the doctor, glaring at the old woman. "And Mr. Macdonald is a mining engineer. There are such horrible cave-ins, aren't there? I always wonder why the timbers are not more looked to so that everything can be more safely secured."

"The trouble is," said Macdonald, "that when the ground starts moving timbers may be mere matchwood in front of it. When a hundred million tons start slipping, for instance. I've seen timbers that were two feet through, of good, seasoned, solid wood, smash up slowly, like soft candy."

"Horrible!" said Mrs. Lancaster. "It makes me frightfully ill to think of it."

"It's made a lot of people dead, even," said Macdonald. He turned his cheerful face and smile around the table. He really had a very genial manner and Kennedy warmed toward him. "Unstable ground," he added, "is queer stuff. When miners enter an old stope, for instance, they never speak aloud. They whisper, because vibration, even just the faint touch of a vibrating human voice, may be enough to start a thousand tons falling.

"You hear one pebble fall, far away. Then something like the rustling of a skirt—if you've ever heard that rustling, any miner will listen to your stories the rest of your life, because you're a lucky chap to have lived through it. After the rustling, the big stones begin, or the whole ruin may come down with a rush."

"What dreadful danger!" said the doctor. "Strange that men can be induced to work underground."

"Oh, life is always cheap," said Macdonald.

"But can't the uncertain ground be studied and the miners forewarned?" asked Kennedy.

"Yes, of course," said Macdonald. "You get so that you can almost read the mind of a drift after you've gone into it and looked around for a while. You have practice but beyond that you have instinct that tells you when the ground will move—say in thirty days. It's best not to be wrong about it."

"Were *you* ever wrong about it?" asked Mrs. Lancaster.

"Yes. Once," said Macdonald.

"Do tell us," she begged.

"You wouldn't like it," said Macdonald. "I didn't like it at the time."

But still he kept on smiling, and Kennedy remembered that smile when he was back in his cabin. What he chiefly regretted was that he had not poised and prepared that single word "murder" in such a way that it would have told more sharply. It was tact that he should have used in making that remark. Tact would have enabled him to choose a moment when his three suspects were right under his eye, and then it might have meant something.

As it happened, he had dropped his depth charge into a whole school of fish, and every one of them had been alarmed. There was no use looking for degrees. He remembered, with a smile, Mrs. Lancaster's small scream. He was beginning to wonder if the old lady did not really dote on violent sensations.

HE TURNED out the light and sat in the darkness for a time, adding up all his faults and frailities. He could not help wishing that the Creator had added several things to his gift-basket. He would have chosen a little more grace, better looks, and above all he would have prayed for bravery.

This thought pursued him. On his other adventures he had not needed it so much, but now he found himself

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horribly tempted to pack his knapsack and leave Seven Mile House, even in the middle of the night. For no matter how he had tried to smooth it over, his use of the word "murder" at the table this night must have revealed a great deal to the killer of William Harrison.

The dog, roving back and forth unhappily through the cabin, stood up to look out the window. When he had dropped down, he turned to Kennedy and poked him with his nose. Kennedy obediently got up and looked out.

It was not late, but every light was gone in the tavern. A clouded moon shone somewhere in the east and showed him a woman going toward the toolshed.

Kennedy got out of the cabin instantly. He hurried down by the bank of the stream and came up toward the toolshed from that side, which was farthest from Seven Mile House. There was a dim light now inside the shed. It was so faint that hardly any radiance escaped through the big cracks in the side of the shanty, but when Kennedy had his eye at the first aperture, he saw Julie Vernon leaning over Harrison's body. She had drawn the sheet back to his hips and as she bent above him, Kennedy would have given a great deal to see her face. However, he dared not change his position.

She unbuttoned Harrison's coat, turned back the flaps of it, and drew his wallet from his inside pocket. Here Kennedy in his excitement leaned forward with such weight that the flimsy board gave with a creak under his hand. Julie Vernon started around, shining the electric torch straight at him.

Brighter than the light, in the eyes of Kennedy, was the businesslike automatic which she lifted. And more important still was her face, left in such shadow that he could rather guess at than see the flare of the nostrils, the hard, quick resolution. Through the crack just before his face, he swore that she must be seeing him, but after a moment she turned away to open the wallet and after an instant of search to take from it what seemed to him a folded bit of newsprint. The wallet she then restored to the pocket, rebuttoned the coat, and drew up the sheet as it had been before.

Kennedy, walking as on thin ice, tiptoed back from the toolshed. He had gained the shelter of one of the willows by the bank of the stream, when a light brushed through the branches. He half expected a bullet to come crashing after it, but then he saw Julie Vernon outside the shed turning her flashlight back and forth. He had reached his shelter barely in time. He feared that she might examine the ground for footprints, but after an instant she turned back to Seven Mile House and disappeared in the entrance hall.

And suddenly Kennedy knew that he must follow her. That gun and the look of her, ready to use it, had frightened him badly enough, and yet the imp of the perverse was driving him straight after her, for he must in some manner read what she had taken from Harrison.

SO HE found his feet carrying him steadily up the steps, across the veranda, and through the unlocked front door of the tavern. He passed through the living room. Beyond it, Julie Vernon stood in the unlighted lounge, but the dying fire on the hearth gave it a certain amount of illumination.

"Oh, Miss Vernon!" said Kennedy.

She turned sharply about and threw something behind her toward the hearth. Into the flames it seemed to go, and he felt with a pang greater than his fear that he had lost his opportunity.

"Yes? Yes?" she answered, lifting her voice high with the second word.

He paused in the doorway.

"It *is* a bit damp and chilly out there in the cabin," he said. "I put on my clothes again—and then I thought perhaps I could get an extra blanket?"

The tension passed slowly from her. Yet she made a brief pause before she answered: "Very well. I'll bring you one."

She crossed the living room, saying brusquely over her shoulder: "If you'll come this way, please. . . ."

"Certainly," mumbled Kennedy around a cigarette, vainly snapping a lighter to ignite it. And as she went on through the doorway, he slipped back to the fire on the hearth. There was still a thin ghost of a hope that the crumpled paper might have rolled through the coals and onto the dead ashes. In fact, he found a tiny twist of newsprint dusted over with ashes in a corner of the hearth. He pocketed it.

When he reaced the hall, Julie Vernon was coming down the stairs with a white blanket over her arm.

His cigarette was burning, but to explain his delay he kept on whirling the wheel of his lighter with an impatient thumb.

"These gadgets," he said. "A man will make a fortune if he manufactures one that really goes."

"I daresay," said Julie Vernon, waiting for him to go.

"Goodnight, and thanks," said Kennedy, turning to the door.

"Goodnight," she said.

"You don't like me at all, do you?" he said, holding the door open.

"Isn't that an odd question?" she asked.

"Oh, I expect the truth," answered Kennedy. "It generally hurts, but I like to have it."

She came suddenly to him and looked up into his face. She was serious. There was not even a hint of a smile, and this masculine gravity made her look older. He could see the small wrinkles around her eyes and one shadowy mark in the center of her forehead that he had not noted before.

"Are you honest, Mr. Kennedy?" she asked.

He was about to smile and say that he hoped he was fairly honest but an odd impulse towards confession swept over him.

"I don't know," he found himself saying. "Honesty's something to pray for, I suppose, not something to own. Mine gets away from me. God made me a simple fellow but sometimes I'm dodging behind that simplicity and having all sorts of ideas."

"I thought so," she said. "What are you after, Mr. Kennedy? Just what is on your mind?"

"There's sleep on my mind, just now," he said, and tried to smile.

It was no use.

"That's hardly true," she answered. "I'm afraid that you don't intend to close your eyes at all."

"Well, I'll do my best. And goodnight again."

"I'm afraid that it's goodbye, isn't it?" she asked, gravely.

He got outside the door, somehow and went hastily across the porch. He was halfway down the steps before he realized that a tall figure had been standing on the

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veranda, wrapped in a coat or cloak. Now he glanced back over his shoulder and made sure that the form was there. He did not speak, and there was no word from the other, but he knew in his cold, shrinking heart that Daniel Fargo was there, on watch.

CHAPTER VI

NEWS FROM YESTERDAY

WHEN he reached the cabin, a new fear came up in him, a grisly conviction that something waited for him inside. At the door he hissed. He heard the dog instantly on the move but this did not deny the possibility that the dog's owner might be with him.

When he pulled open the door, the big body of the shepherd almost knocked him flat as it sprang through the gap. He made a frantic clutch at the chain and caught it by a lucky chance. The shock jerked him to his knees and one hand but it stopped the dog, which was busily at work with its nose to the ground.

Someone decidedly had been there in the past few moments. He dragged the big dog back into the cabin and lighted the lamp again. What looked like a pool of blood glistened red in a corner. It proved to be a fine cut of steak. As he lifted it, the dog came up hungrily but after a sniff or two turned away without touching it.

Wolves, they say, will come to know poison by its smell; and this dog seemed more wild than tame.

This was the second effort the killer had made to remove the dog from his trail. Perhaps he had worked the window open, spoken to the poor beast and caressed it before he tossed in the poisoned meat?

Kennedy secured the shutters of the window again. Still he was not alone. There were crevices in these walls, not so large to be sure as those of the toolshed, but amply big enough, here and there, to let an eye look in, and where an eye can look, a gun can shoot. The wind which had been rising now was a strong sweep down the valley and it whistled around and into the cabin of Kennedy with a chorus of small, shrilling voices.

That twist of paper seemed to him now more important than poisoned meat or pointing guns. He hooded the light of his lamp so that it shone freely on one point only. Then he undid the bit of newsprint which had been in his pocket. It was torn by the tightness of the twist it had been given, but he was able to smooth it out fairly well and piece in from imagination the few words which had disappeared.

It was a newsclipping of some length, which read: "At 9.55 last night the jury in the Crittenden murder case filed into the jury box, the judge appeared in his robes, the court was brought to order, and the foreman read a verdict of Not Guilty.

"The crowd, which had been waiting since eleven in the morning, seemed of a divided mind. There were some catcalls and whistles mixed with a burst of applause.

"The defendant, Jessica Vance, as calm as she had been through the entire trial, thanked each of the jurors in person, posed for camera shots, and then fainted. Her attorney, William Harrison, then. . . ."

HERE Kennedy stopped reading for a moment. He was drinking in his information too rapidly, it seemed. William Harrison, he remembered, had been a lawyer in the East before he took up mining promotion. And the initials of Jessica Vance were those of Julie Vernon.

So Harrison had appeared here with this little document which was no more than a reminder of the past. And what could Julie Vernon do with Seven Mile House, if it were known that she once had been tried for murder? In American courts, it seems, innocence never is proved. The very atmosphere of crime seems to exlude from our legal processes, and the stigma once attached to a name never can be washed clean again.

Was it blackmail that Harrison wanted? Had Julie Vernon and big Daniel Fargo between them disposed of this unwelcome guest? He could remember, from the tale of Maria, that Harrison had been a lot with Julie Vernon. Of course he had, for who could refuse anything to a man who knew so critically much about the past?

It might well be that Julie, however aware of danger from Harrison, had not lifted a hand to get rid of him. In that case, Fargo might have acted.

Kennedy returned to the clipping. It was one of those old New York stories, one of those fine flowerings which have their roots in Wall Street and bloom on Broadway. Mr. Crittenden, a broker who appeared richer than he was, had interested himself in his pretty young stenographer, who had stage ambitions.

A play had been chosen. Arrangements were being made to buy it. Casting problems had been put up to a producer. And then everything went sour. Suddenly the play no longer was headed for the boards. And a day or so later Mr. Crittenden was shot in his apartment. It was not a very mysterious killing, because Miss Vance had a key to the apartment. However, it was not definitely proved that she had lived with her employer. Neither was it proved that she owned a revolver or that she had fired the shots which killed Crittenden.

There was another possibility. It was known that a woman had entered the rooms of Crittenden that night; but there was a possibility that Crittenden's wife, from whom he had been separated for some time, might have used her old key to the place. It was this that saved Jessica Vance.

But though the jury acquitted her, it was not hard to understand why she had chosen to erase the old name and enter the world with a new one. It was not strange that she had desired to live as far from New York as Seven Mile House, either. And if a William Harrison who once had secured her acquittal appeared in her life again, surely she would be clay in his hands.

Kennedy touched the flame of his lighter to the clipping and watched it burn to a black ash that turned gray, dissolved, and floated into the air, lifted by the fire that consumed the last corner. Then he hastened to put out the lamp. Even after that, however, to his jumpy nerves it seemed that the wind was filled with angry voices that gathered in the distance and ran toward him.

He stretched himself on his bed, the blanket still huddled about him. He could not think very well. The best he could do was to watch the crawling of the moonlight which entered through a bit of glass that served as a skylight and could be lifted in hot weather to give the small room better ventilation. The rectangular patch of light had left the floor and was lifting along the frame of the door. It reached the brass knob, in due time, and the attention of Kennedy, as he lay there fixed on the glistening metal. That was how he happened to see it move.

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He sensed that peril behind him

CHAPTER VII

NIGHT-WALKER

WE TELL ourselves that we are dreaming, that it is illusion, when such things occur. So did Kennedy, sitting bolt upright, his heart in his throat. And the wind, shaking the little cabin from top to toe, screamed for him like a mad thing.

The knob turned back, hesitated, once more moved slowly to the left, paused, and again turned back to the normal position. If the master of the dog were standing there, why did not the brute scent him and go wild with joy? But then Kennedy remembered that the gale was blowing from the opposite direction.

He waited with hysteria growing up in him; then he bounded from the bed, turned the key, and jerked the door open.

The whole air of the cabin seemed to rush out past him in a single breath, but no one stood at the door. The dog, struggling to get past him, he caught by the lead and permitted him to get a few steps into the open, but here a drift of clouds blackened the face of the moon and Kennedy could see no more. After all, there were plenty of trees behind which this night-walker could have disappeared.

Courage faded out of Kennedy swiftly. He pulled the dog back inside the cabin and sat down again with his face in his hands. But that was blinding himself to danger that might break in at him. He sat erect. The skylight, through which the moon was shining again, was like a pointed gun.

Still that curious brain of his was examining the situation, twisting it, turning it, moralizing. The hand which had come there and turned the doorknob, prepared for murder, had hesitated to break down the door! Yet the noise hardly would have reached the Seven Mile House, in this outcry and yelling of the wind. One thrust of the shoulder would have beaten the door in, of course. But if it failed to do so, the man inside would be roused and alert for his defense. But what had he for defense except his bare hands?

His mind kept turning back to murder. It is the only common madness. One can understand war-killings when masses of men go over the top in a shouting passion. But murder that goes forehanded about its work is incomprehensible. Even now Kennedy refused to believe that an enemy had stood there outside his door, softly fumbling at the knob.

He swept his things into his knapsack, laid three one-dollar bills on the washstand and went out into the open night with the wind pushing him forward, lengthening his strides until it was like walking downstairs.

The sooner he was away among the windy hills with Seven Mile House out of sight behind him, the better. It was behind him now. Perhaps from one of its dark windows eyes watched with satisfaction his departure. Far off there among the sea of hills he would find some place a little sheltered from the dry storm and spend the rest of the night.

The dog, suddenly checking at some trail on the ground, jerked him suddenly round. The wind blew his eyes dry and hot in a moment. It was so strong that it seemed to give visible motion to the trembling stars. Seven Mile House, half obscured behind a hillside, was withdrawing from his life like an ugly dream, but into this nightmare the dog was straining every nerve to return.

And suddenly Kennedy knew that he must go back. He hardly could believe the strength of the impulse that overmastered him. Perhaps sailors felt like that when they stood to the guns with the ship sinking beneath them, but with some strange sense of duty keeping them at their posts. So it was with Kennedy.

He seemed to let the dog's will overcome his own; and back toward Seven Mile House he struggled through the wind with his head down. He knew with the first step he took that he would have to stick to this problem until he had dragged murder out into the light of day.

WHEN he reached the cabin, he knew what he must do. The meat he had found on the floor, he wrapped in a sheet of newspaper. Then he set the door wide open. Once more he was in the night, with the wind putting the strength of its hand into the hollow of his back, blowing him forward.

Overhead, the sky was partly a rushing of clouds and in part an apparent swift streaming of the stars. The moon kept lifting itself from the cloud masses to overlook the world and then hooding itself once more till the mountains

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were lost in blackness. The world seemed to stand still, while the heavens spun about it.

Back of Seven Mile House he'd seen a coon with a face like a wise little black monkey. It lived in a weird enclosure not far from the house. Kennedy brought to the poor devil his gift of red meat, for he had to be sure. By some silly chance in a million, someone might have brought the food to the dog; by some odder chance, it might not be poisoned at all but merely have failed to please the palate of the dog. So Kennedy opened the latch of the door in the coon's yard and tossed the meat in. Then he sat down on a rock with his back to the wind and watched.

From his sleeping hutch in the trees, he saw the coon come down like a climbing ape. He watched it find the meat. Then in the little run of water which crossed the yard, the moonlight clearly showed the little animal washing the treasure. After that it ate, tearing the meat into long shreds and then feeding itself with its hands, sitting up almost like a human.

Kennedy watched with a sick expectation. Perhaps doctors felt like this when they tried their deadly contraptions on guinea pigs or white rats. They had to be sure as fate, even though they already were reasonably convinced, and a thousand little rodents must die to assure a single point in a cure.

The coon no longer ate. The meat lay forgotten on the ground. And now the coon was drinking thirstily, now twisting itself into a knot of pain. It drank again till another throe interrupted it.

A strange little cry of sorrow came from the coon. In the dark of the moon it streaked up the tree to its sleeping place. A moment later it was down again, drinking hungrily at the run of water. And yet again Kennedy heard its faint outcry, like that of a human being stifling an agony.

CHAPTER VIII

CALL TO DEATH

HE TOOK the dog back to the cabin. There, close to the door, it picked up at once a strong trail so fresh that Kennedy could hardly maintain his hold on the leash, the big shepherd straining forward with sinking hips and struggling shoulders. The trail wound back into the trees, as Kennedy expected. There was no possibility of going secretly, for the dog, throttled by its own pull on the collar, gasped like an engine.

Trees loomed at Kennedy; from every one he half expected a dim figure to step out with a leveled gun. But now the trail ran straight to the front of the tavern. He checked the dog there, dropping on one knee and holding it by the shoulders until it had regained its breath. Still it was impatient to be gone. No matter what they had passed through together, the strange beast merely tolerated him as a necessary evil. His heart was set on a single object.

After a moment, he started on again with the dog, up the steps of the veranda, staring into the gloom where he last had seen Fargo standing. But there was nothing on the long porch except the force and the voice of the wind. The front door was not locked. He opened it, and the dog jerked him suddenly inside, down the hall, and halfway up the stairs.

Here, because it began to choke and cough against the restraint once more, he caught it again by the shoulders. The shepherd, half crazed with anxiety to be gone on the fresh trail that ran over the carpet, snarled in Kennedy's face with bared teeth. Kennedy held on, waiting for that hoarse breathing to grow quieter. And in him there was a horrible surety that figures stood in the doorways, whispering, watching him. He looked up at something that moved. It was the old-fashioned hanging lamp in the hall, turned down so that its light merely served, like Milton's hell-fire, to make darkness visible.

There was a sound of wind all through the house but no drafts of any strength, and yet the lamp was swinging slowly from side to side like a pendulum running down. He had a strangely anxious desire to steady it to stillness. It seemed to him to be marking out the long seconds of a different sort of time, the time which dealt with murder and the fate of the murderer, measuring out a course of events in which Kennedy himself was involved.

Here the dog, too long delayed, made a great effort. Struggling blindly, he swung his head. It knocked like a wooden maul against the jaw of Kennedy and out of his nerveless hands the big brute raced up the stairs. He got to his feet to follow but he was badly dazed. Once more, it seemed, the shepherd would bring him to the quarry too late or else overrun the mark.

Desperately Kennedy staggered up the stairs to the hall. The dog had turned to the right but now the scratch of its nails and the thudding of its feet was lost in silence. Through the long tunnel of gloom Kennedy ran on. At the very end of the corridor was a streak of pale light beneath a door. He found the knob, pushed the door open, and stepped out onto a loggia all open to the west.

It was the slant moonshine that had stolen under the door, and in the middle of the floor lay the dog with something white between his paws. When Kennedy came near, the shepherd half lifted himself, ready to attack. There was no doubt about his readiness to die defending the little wisp of cloth which he now guarded. It was a good linen handkerchief, to judge by the translucence of the cloth in the moonlight, but Kennedy could not tell whether it was a little wisp of a woman's handkerchief or a man's larger one.

Here on this loggia, protected from the sweep of the night wind, his murderer had been sitting mere seconds before. How could he now be followed in the changing light of the moon and through the shadows of the trees, even if Kennedy had the courage to leap over the loggia's rail and try to run him down? It was an easy jump, for the slope of the hillside shortened the distance.

THERE was one thing he could attempt without the dog's help. He hurried back into the hall. Here on either side were the rooms in which the guests were lodged—if only he could know which of them housed his suspects! A wiser man, a man of any forethought at all, engaged on this dangerous business, would have found out all of these details long before.

Nevertheless, he now was able to see in the dim hallway the gleam of the doorknob. He knocked on the first door to his right. The sleepy voice of an old woman answered: "Who's there?"

"Mistake. Wrong room," called Kennedy.

He tried the left hand door. A man called out in reply. That would be the doctor. So he went on, anxiously, praying for a door from which there might be no response.

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Time was very short indeed. At this very moment, no doubt, his fugitive had scampered up the hillside and was returning to one of these rooms. He tried again a door to the right. It pulled suddenly open and before him stood the imposing bulk of the singer, Macdonald. He wore a long dressing-gown of a thin, figured silk, rich enough to suit a mandarin.

"What's up?" asked Macdonald in his warm, genial voice. "I thought I heard somebody knocking, up and down the hall."

"That scoundrel of a dog of mine," answered Kennedy. "He broke away and bolted into the tavern. Can't find him, and I thought he might have gotten into one of these rooms."

"How'd he get through the front door?" asked Macdonald.

"I don't know. It must have been ajar," said Kennedy. "Sorry to bother you."

"Not at all. Mysterious sort of a devil, isn't he?"

"I never saw another like him," admitted Kennedy.

It was too late, now, to go on with his exploration of the rooms. This interruption had given plenty of time for his fugitive to regain the inside of the tavern.

"I'd ask you in," said Macdonald, yawning hugely, "but I'm for bed. Goodnight, and good luck with the dog. Don't let him take an arm off you, one of these days!"

He laughed a little and closed his door, and the last thing that Kennedy saw on him was his shoes beneath the edge of the dressing gown. For Macdonald was not wearing slippers, as one might have expected, but heavy brogans, and they were quite heavily coated with dust. Almost like the very salvation of his soul, Kennedy wished that he could remember in what condition the shoes of Macdonald had been that evening. Was it Macdonald who, a moment before, had been out there on the loggia?

HE RETURNED to the loggia. It was in his thought that the dog would have vanished. But there he still lay, so happy in guarding this token of his owner that his tail continually swept the loggia floor. To try mere force on him would be like attacking a machine-gun nest. Kennedy remembered the word which Guyas had used with such effect.

"Venga!" commanded Kennedy.

The big head of the dog canted to one side. His ears pricked. The dark markings around and between the eyes which gave the leonine aspect to him, and the look of frowning wisdom, altered suddenly. He seemed trying to make sense of something that was almost but not quite known to him. Perhaps the word of command was not quite right? Kennedy determined to try a cognate tongue.

"Viene qui!" he ordered peremptorily.

The dog rose instantly to his feet. The handkerchief at his feet he started to pick up between his teeth.

"Qui!" called Kennedy.

And the big fellow, letting the handkerchief lie there, advanced readily toward him, even wagging his tail as if in expectation of a pleasant greeting. The triumph that warmed the heart of Kennedy had only a moment to live. Out of the moonlight and the shadows of the hillside trees a whistle sounded, not overloud. At the sound of it the dog whirled and bolted for the railing. He scooped up the handkerchief on his way and vaulted over the railing with the white cloth fluttering between his teeth.

This was the time, Kennedy knew, to make one of two choices. Either now he ran back to the rooms and once more searched to find who was absent from them, or else he attempted instantly to follow the trail through the night. In the distance he heard the dog's whine of joy as it joined its owner, then silence.

Kennedy put his hand on the railing and vaulted down to the slope, slipped on the rolling gravel to hand and knees and came up with raw palms and battered knee-caps. There is nothing more painful than a good knock on the knees, Kennedy was groaning as he stumbled forward. And here the moon, which had been shining brightly as early morning, rolled into a dense cloud and left Kennedy to darkness and his own clumsy instinct for direction. The result was that he had run full on into a tree and knocked out his breath.

Bent over with his hands on his knees, he listened again for the voice of the dog somewhere in the distance to guide him. Then he went on, running, stumbling, his hands held out to ward off the sudden dangers that jumped toward his face. A quick brightening of the moon promised to give him again a surer way through the woods, but it failed to come completely out of the clouds. As through a mist, he was searching through a half light, when he saw something in vague, struggling motion off to his right. A moment later he was reaching out his hands toward the dog.

IT LAY prone, raking leaves and soil away in its blind struggling. It snapped at the hands of Kennedy furiously. He had to draw back a little. Perhaps, in fact, there was nothing he could do, for if ever he had seen a death-struggle this was one. Only one thing was missing.

He remembered, now. There should have been that most horrible of all sounds, the rack and gasping of lungs after breath that cannot be taken; and of this there was not a token in the dog.

It lay more quietly now, its tongue lolling, its head down, its legs kicking out only once and again. Kennedy, leaning by it, found what he expected. The thick ruff of fur around the throat at one point was bound down. Through the hair he found a wire so thin that it cut the fingers with which he strove to break it.

He pulled out his pocket knife. There was no longer a struggle. The poor beast, seeming larger than ever as it stretched flat on the ground, lay inert. A short fingernail failed to open the knife. He tried with his teeth. They slipped from the hard steel. Then a thumb nail pried the blade open. He reached desperately with it. It hardly mattered whether he cut through both flesh and wire. But now the blade was beneath the metal. A hard tug cut or snapped that thin garrot.

Still there was no life, no sign of returning breath. He turned the dog on its stomach and, kneeling above it, began the motions of resurrection which are used on those who come out of the sea half-drowned. Rhythmically he pressed down, relaxed his weight, pressed down again.

Then life returned. It was not a slow process. It came in a sudden bunching of the lifeless muscles; and an instant later the dog was on his feet.

When at last he stood straight, the breathing sounds no more a rattling wheeze, he still found in Kennedy a stranger and still he was urging forward to take the trail of his master who had just left him to die.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

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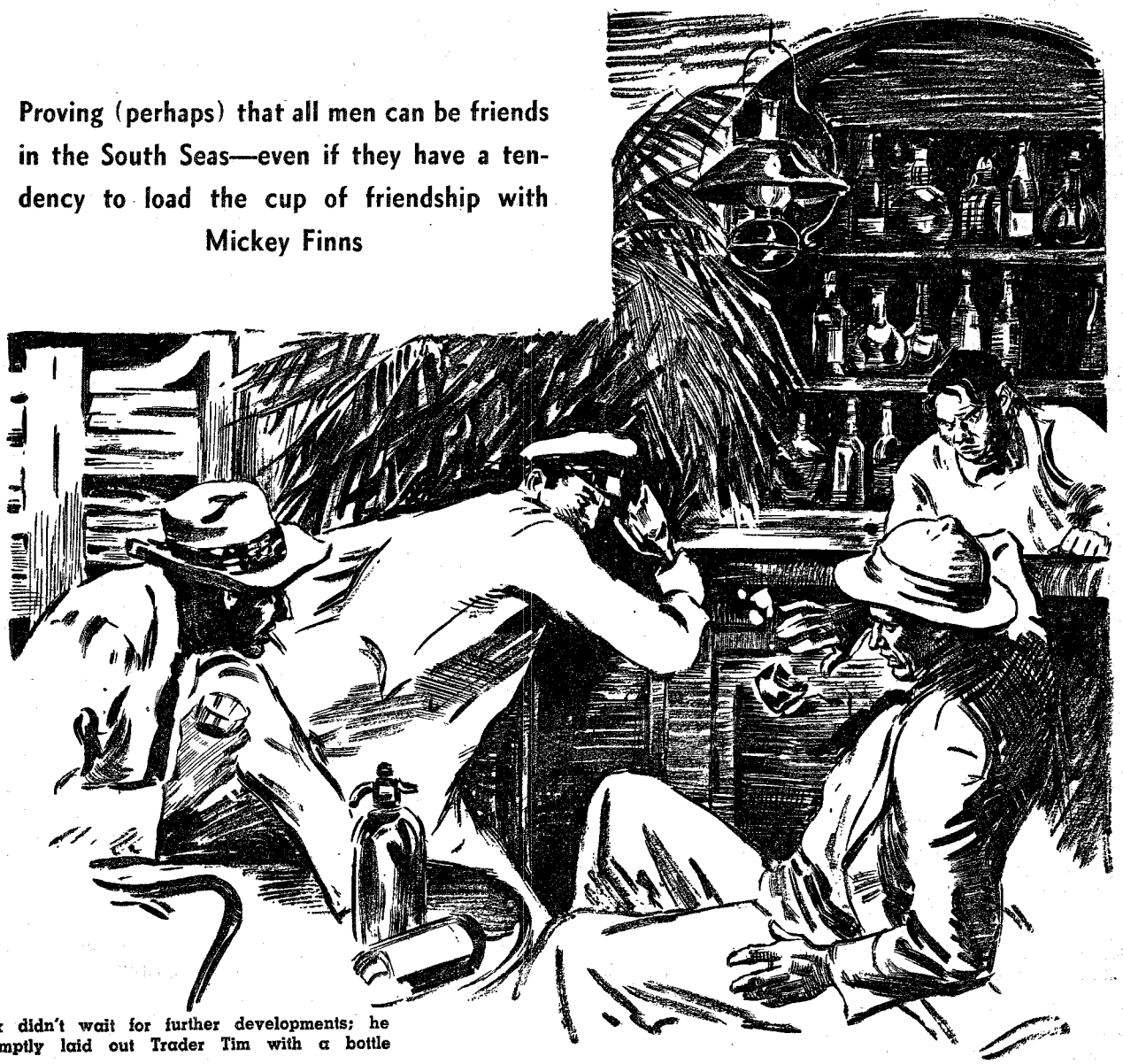
Proving (perhaps) that all men can be friends in the South Seas—even if they have a tendency to load the cup of friendship with Mickey Finns



Jock didn't wait for further developments; he promptly laid out Trader Tim with a bottle

No More Fridays

By Crawford Sullivan

Autor of "Pandemonium Goes to Sea," "Swim Along, Little Dogie," etc.

JOCK McWHIRTLE was possibly the only skipper in existence who was accustomed to arriving at his destination the day before he started.

This was possible because Jack sailed twice weekly from Starbuck Island, 179° 30′ east longitude, to Rukuruku Island, 179° 30′ west longtitude. The International Date Line straddles the 180th meridian in this section of the Pacific, so when it is Friday on Starbuck Island it is the preceding Thursday on Rukuruku. Since both islands lie approximately five degrees south of the equator, the distance between them is a little over sixty-five miles.

Jock found this quite a convenient arrangement. He always celebrated the King's birthday in Oska's Saloon on Starbuck. That night his kanaka boys would carry him aboard ship, and by morning he would be in fine fettle to celebrate the King's birthday again on Rukuruku.

A small black Scot with a tremendous appetite for alcohol, Jock McWhirtle had a disastrous experience one King's birthday when his native helmsman smacked the ship squarely into a reef outside Starbuck harbor. The ship sank; and, being overly intoxicated, Jock might have sunk too except for the fact that he had gone to sleep on a life raft which was lying unlashed on the bridge.

"I dinna desairve such a terrible misfortune!" lamented Jock. He leaned heavily against Oska's bar and poured himself five fingers of whiskey. "But as the great poet Bobbie Burrns once said: 'There's na use cryin' overr spilt milk.' "

"It was your own fault," grunted Oska. He was a half-caste Samoan with a rotunda-like paunch, and as cus-

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todian of Starbuck's liquor supply he felt privileged to talk to his steady customers like a Dutch uncle. "If you hadn't been dead drunk—"

"Drunk is an uncou' word," objected Jock. "Shall we say I was alcoholically incapacitated?"

"What will you do now?" inquired Oska.

"With na boat I am ruined." Jock drank the whiskey and wiped his eyes with his shirttail. "I will na get my bonus for fulfilling my contrract with the Anderson Copra Company."

"That's right," said Oska. "You were supposed to get five hundred pounds extra if you delivered the copra from Rukuruku to Starbuck for five years."

"Aye. An' the five yearrs is up next Friday. If I could carry one more shipment I'd be richer by five hundred pounds."

"Too bad for you," said Oska. "But the copra company won't have any trouble in finding another bottom."

"Wha' do ye mean?" demanded Jock. "There is na other independent skipper in this group!"

"Haven't you heard?" countered Oska. "A joker arrived here yesterday in a steam-powered trading vessel. He came to establish a trade in trocas shell, but I imagine he'll be only too glad to handle the Anderson Company's copra."

"The dee'l you say!" Jock frowned. "Wheer is he?"

"Coming through the door now," said Oska calmly. "His name is Trader Tim."

JOCK McWHIRTLE heeled around, his foxy face pinched into a scowl. Lumbering into the saloon was a big hulk of a man with wild yellow hair and small blue eyes which had a confident glint.

Trader Tim walked with a seaman's swagger, his ham-like hands swinging, a polished tiger tusk dangling from his gold watch chain. Slapping a pound note on the bar, he bellowed:

"Drinks all around for thirsty men! Charge it up to Trader Tim!"

The native girls at the back of the room tittered. Billy the Beachcomber uttered a yell of joy, and the men from the sugar mill waved their hands good-naturedly.

Jock McWhortle edged to one side, watching the newcomer quaff down a glass of Oska's vitriolic rum. His dark brows squinched down toward his nose; he was thinking.

"Music, lads!" roared Trader Tim. "If a man can't be merry in the South Seas, he be better off married at home. Ho! Ho!"

Everybody laughed. William Vakasoli picked up his accordion and began to pump away. The native girls started swaying. There was a tinkle of glasses, a rising crescendo of gaiety. Oska's saloon had suddenly sprung alive.

Jock McWhirtle took another bracer of whiskey, prudently charging it up to Trader Tim. After drinking it, he sidled up to his host. "Allow me to present mysel'," he said. "I am Cap'n McWhirtle, formmer skipper o' the *Hi'land Lady*."

"Oho!" Tim's massive face broke into a grin. "So you're the lubber who—"

Jock nodded. "I would na take too much o' yurr precious time," he said humbly. "But if ye could spare a few moments to discuss a business proposition, I'd—"

"Fire away," Trader Tim chuckled patronizingly. "But I'm afraid I won't be interested. Next week I'm signing a five-year contract with the Anderson Copra Company."

Jock munched his lip. "Na doubt the same contract I signed five years ago," he declared bitterly. " 'Twas that wheech I wished to discuss. If I could carry one more load o' copra—thus foolfilling my obligation—I would be richer by five hundred pounds, I was thinkin', laddie, that maybe ye would na object to lending me yurr boat."

"Lend you my boat?" Trader Tim broke into a gust of laughter, slapping his stomach. "That's rich!"

" 'Tis Tuesday now," continued Jock. "If ye would but lend me the vessel till Friday, I'll split the bonus wi' ye. Two hundred fifty pounds is na chicken feed for three days' rent."

"Two hundred and fifty pounds, eh?" The bumptious tone was gone, and Trader Tim's voice became coldly businesslike. "How do I know you'll pay it to me?"

"We'll both sign an agrreement fair an' squair," said Jock. "Wi' two hundred fifty quid I can pay my passage back to Scotland. In the wurrds o' the immortal Bobbie Burrns: 'There's na place like home!' "

"Bobbie Burns never said that," corrected Trader Tim.

"Ne'er the less, it's the truth," sighed Jock fervently. "How I long to leave these islands of clam shells an' coconuts, an' wander amongst the purrple thistle! Will ye do it, mon? So that poor Jock McWhirtle can go to lie beside his ancestors?"

"Well—" Trader Tim rubbed one thumb and forefinger together as if feeling the money in his grasp— "I won't need my ship until next week—"

"Then it's a bargain?" clipped Jock eagerly.

Trader Tim turned to Oska, who had been lapping up the conversation with both ears. "You know this fellow?" he asked. "Is he a man of his word?"

"Yes," said Oska definitely. "Jock has never broken his word. I'll vouch for that."

"And he won't wreck my ship?"

"Not if he stays sober," said Oska.

Trader Tim smacked his fist on the bar. "Then I take the offer," he growled. "But remember, McWhirtle, if you try to welch on the deal, I'll give you the drubbing of your life!"

"Jock McWhirtle is na welcher," was the proud reply. "Shall we hae a wee one to seal the bargain, then go to the ship an' sign the paper?"

TRADER TIM'S ship, the *Mandarin*, was a squat rusty tub with the paint peeling down the sides of the deckhouse. It had a crew of six kanakas: three to work on deck and three to run the absurd little engine which churned her along at a good eight knots.

The skipper's quarters were an outward manifestation of Trader Tim's personality. One wall of the cabin was decorated with photos of beautiful girls—all shapes and nationalities. A mandolin lay in one corner and a pair of brass knuckles was on the desk, half-hidden by a litter of worn playing cards.

At lot of dog-eared books were stacked up in a case. One of them, *An Outline of Physics*, lay open on the unmade bunk.

After looking over the cabin appraisingly, Jock McWhirtle gave a nod of approval and seated himself at the desk. "Now, sair," he said, "will ye gi' me a pen an' the ship's log book, an' I'll write up the contract."

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"Why write it in the ship's log book?" asked Tim. "Won't a piece of paper suit you?"

"A paper might be lost," objected Jock. "Furthermore, upon arrivin' in Rukuruku I might be challenged by authorities an' accused of stealin' the vessel. If I can show 'em the agreement written in the log book—"

"I see what you mean," Tim cut in. "It's illegal to falsify entries in a ship's log; and if you try to back out of the bargain by tearing out the page, I'll have you charged with piracy."

"Aye," smiled Jock. "An' now I will draw up the dockeement to yurr satisfaction."

He wrote on the fly leaf of the log book in a bold squarish hand. When completed, the agreement read:

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 1939.

To whom it may concern:

This certifies that the owner of the Mandarin, Timothy Mulroony, does hereby sanction, warrant and otherwise permit John Abernathy McWhirtle to operate, propel and have complete custody over aforesaid vessel until the following Friday as recorded in the ship's log.

In recompense thereof, John Abernathy McWhirtle does agree to pay Timothy Mulroony the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds (£250) on the day (Friday) that the aforesaid ship is returned to its aforesaid owner (T. Mulroony.)

Signed:
Party of the first part: John Abernathy McWhirtle

Party of the second part: Timothy Mulroony

Witnesses:
Vokasola Totaranga (A. B.)
Joe Medrauscau (Engineer)

"An ironclad contrract!" exclaimed Jock. "Does it satisfy ye, ma laddie?"

Trader Tim looked at it again to make certain and nodded his shaggy head. "Seems fair enough," he granted.

"Then we'll seal the bargain wi' a wee one," proposed Jock, reaching for a whiskey bottle which stood on a shelf. "I feel that ma luck has changed. To quote Bobbie Burrns: ' 'Tis a long road which hae no turnin'.' "

"Humph!" snorted Trader Tim. "If Burns wrote that, I'm a jackass."

"I would na conterr-dict ye," returned Jock. " 'Tis possible that we're both right."

Tim scratched his head thoughtfully, but was unable to figure out what he meant.

ON WEDNESDAY the *Mandarin* left Starbuck Island with Jock McWhirtle in command. There was a big party at Oska's that night, and Trader Tim spent all of Thursday sleeping off a hangover. Early Friday he was down at the wharf to meet the boat and collect his share of the money. By nightfall the *Mandarin* had not returned.

Tim paced the wharf until midnight, making the night horrid with curses and halting now and then to shake his fist toward the sea.

"That double-crossing rat!" he bellowed at the natives who had assembled to observe the strange ways of the white man. "If he tries to steal my ship, I'll have him hung for piracy! I'll beat him to a pulp and pump him out of the bilge!"

Finally he gave up and returned to his bungalow on the Point. Next morning when he stopped in at Oska's for an eye-opener he saw Jock McWhirtle absorbing whiskey at the bar.

"So you're back!" he grunted in relief. "Did you get the bonus for bringing in the copra?"

"Aye," smiled Jock. "The full five hundred pounds."

"Well, let's see my share."

"In due time, laddie," said Jock brusquely. "When I return yurr ship."

"You were supposed to have brought the ship back yesterday," snapped Tim.

"Na, lad," Jock objected. "Accordin' to our bargain, I dinna hae to return yon vessel to ye until Friday."

"Yesterday was Friday!"

Jock shook his head. " 'Twas Thursday where I was. Rukuruku is on the otherr side o' the date line."

Tim was turning purple.

"But today's Saturday; you can't get around that!"

"True," nodded Jock. "I crossed the date line promptly at midnight, an' somehow I sailed straight from Thursday into Saturday."

Tim clenched his fists. "I'll stand for none of your shenanigans!" he snarled. "I want my ship and I want my money!"

"Ye'll get the both o' them," promised Jock. "On Friday."

"I want 'em *now!*" Tim's gaze was sparked with fire; his heavy features were wrinkled into a ferocious scowl.

"He's got you, Tim," said Oska. The bartender pointed to the *Mandarin's* log book, which lay before him. "It says here that Jock can keep the ship until the following Friday, 'as recorded in the ship's log.' There wasn't any Friday this week, so you can't claim the ship until next Friday."

"It's illegal!" raged Tim. "I'll go to the resident general!"

"I've already explained the matter to him," said Jock placidly. "He claims it's entirely properr an' within the law."

Trader Tim's anger simmered to a cold white heat. The blood drained from his face, and his lips became a thin blue line. "I'll give you one minute," he said grimly. "If the money isn't in my hand by then, you are a dead Scotchman."

"Be reasonable, mon," Jock pleaded. "I'm within ma rights—"

Snatching a full whiskey bottle off the bar, he gave it a quick sling and caught Tim squarely between the eyes.

Trader Tim went down like a rhino with the dropsy, causing the building to shiver. When he came to, Jock and the ship's log book were gone.

"It's your fault!" he fumed at the bartender. "You told me that crook was a man of his word!"

"He is," insisted Oska. "But he's also the trickiest rascal south of the line. I could have told you that, but you didn't ask me."

"He can't get away with this larceny," said Tim hotly. "Wait until *next* Friday!"

But as far as Jock McWhirtle was concerned, Friday never came.

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ON THURSDAY Jock sailed over to Rukuruku. He spent the second Thursday there and set sail in time to reach the International Date Line exactly at midnight, entering the record in the ship's log:

Thursday, Oct. 26, 1939
Reached the 180th meridian at 12 midnight.

Saturday, Oct. 28, 1939
Passed 180th meridian at 12 midnight. Lost a day.

This procedure was followed week after week. Jock signed a new contract with the Anderson Copra Company and continued to ferry cargoes from Rukuruku to Starbuck, where they were picked up by the monthly freight boat. The story of Trader Tim's downfall soon spread all over the southern ocean from Singapore to Valparaiso. Shaken to the core, Tim plotted for revenge.

At first he tried to board the *Mandarin* and seize the ship by brute force, but the kanaka crew was constantly on guard, armed with guns filled with buckshot. He crouched by the warehouse for hours on end, waiting for Jock to come ashore, but the canny Scotsman remained aboard whenever the ship was in Starbuck Harbor.

It is the habit of mankind never to feel sorry for anyone who has been victimized by a clever scoundrel. For some reason sympathy is always with the scoundrel, and the victim is opprobriously labeled as a sucker.

Therefore, when it became known that Tim was planning to inflict serious physical damage upon Jock McWhirtle, the white citizenry of Starbuck appealed to their resident general, and the resident general issued a warning. He declared that Tim was privileged to regain possession of the *Mandarin* by any peaceable or legal means, but warned that any resort to assault, battery or mayhem would result in Tim's ejection from the islands and in permanent forfeiture of the ship.

Upon learning of this edict Tim thumped his barrel chest and howled with rage. He bought ten gallons of whiskey and disappeared into the back hills for an orgy which the natives speak of to this day. When he returned, he appeared to be his old self again—swaggering, confident, raucous. Barging into Oska's one Thursday afternoon, he discovered Jock McWhirtle standing at the bar.

Jock backed away; gripped the top of a bottle defensively. "Stand yurr distance, mon!" he yelped. "If ye hit me, I'll report ye to the—"

"Let bygones be bygones, Jocko," said Tim, slapping a half crown on the bar lustily. "Life's too short to bear grudges, so have a drink on Trader Tim!"

"Yurr na angry wi' me?" Jock still clenched the bottle.

"I know when I'm licked." Tim flashed a broad smile. "Two whiskeys, Oska!"

Jock's dark foxy face became relaxed. "I'm sorry for ye, Tim," he said. "But 'tis the law o' self-preservation for a mon to look out for his own interests."

"Absolutely," agreed Tim. "I'd have done the same thing. Have a drink."

"I canna drink wi' ye long," said Jock. "I'm sailin' in a short while."

"That's right," said Tim. "It wouldn't do for you to be on this side of the date line after midnight. Tomorrow's Friday."

"Aye," nodded Jock. "But 'twill be Thursday where I'll be."

"Drink her down, and we'll have another one," urged Tim. "Order anything you want and charge it up to me. Trader Tim never bears a grudge!"

Jock licked his lips. It was not often that anyone offered to stand him for drinks, since his prodigious capacity was well known. He glanced at his silver watch and decided he could stay just one hour, no longer. That would give him barely enough time to get across the 180th meridian by twelve.

THE patrons of Oska's saloon will long remember the drinking bout that took place within that next hour. The whiskey flowed so fast that Oska developed a lame arm uncorking bottles. They drank from ponies, then from beakers and beer glasses, and finally swigged it straight out of the bottle. They stood elbow to elbow matching drink for drink while the spectators watched bug-eyed and made bets on which one would pass out first.

Slowly but perceptibly Jock's legs started to bow out like bent calipers and his eyes resembled chips of polished agate. His brown face took on a beetlike tinge.

Trader Tim watched intently, certain of victory. His recent binge back in the hills had put him in fine drinking fettle. The more he consumed, the better he felt, and, outside of a slight lack of muscular coordination, he was sober as an owl. Furthermore he was determined to regain his ship. By fair means or foul he had to keep Jock McWhirtle from crossing the date line before midnight.

The minutes dragged on. At last Jock squinted at his watch and said: "The time has come for me to be goin'." He staggered toward the door, and Tim dragged him back. It seemed impossible that any normal man could carry that load of liquor under his own power. Tim was feeling unsteady himself—and he had surreptitiously dumped at least five drinks into the spittoon.

"Just one more," Tim insisted. "One for the King."

"Weel—maybe a last wee droppie," Jock consented. "But that's the last."

Tim took a small capsule from his pocket and broke it into a glass when Jock was looking elsewhere. The capsule contained a few drops of chloral hydrate which he had obtained from the sugar station hospital by bribing a native doctor. He quickly poured in some whiskey and shoved the glass over to Jock. Then he poured a drink for himself.

Suddenly Jock lost his grip on the bar and flopped flat on his face. Tim tried to pick him up, and they both went sprawling. At last Tim managed to prop him against the bar again. "Bottoms up," he said.

"Aye. Bottoms up!"

Tim watched the liquor roll down Jock's gullet. Finishing off his own drink, he waited to observe the results. One thing certain: Jock would never reach the *Mandarin* now.

"Ye're a noble mon, Trader Tim," said Jock in a voice thick with emotion. "Yurr generosity has touched me deeply, an' I'll thank ye for a verra pleasant afternoon. 'Tis a kindness I'll na forrget!"

Before he could reply, cold sweat oozed from Tim's forehead, his legs buckled, and everything went black.

. . . When he woke up, Oska was cleaning out the saloon, and the morning sun was slanting through the bamboo slats in front of the window. He got up from the floor gingerly to keep his head from falling off.

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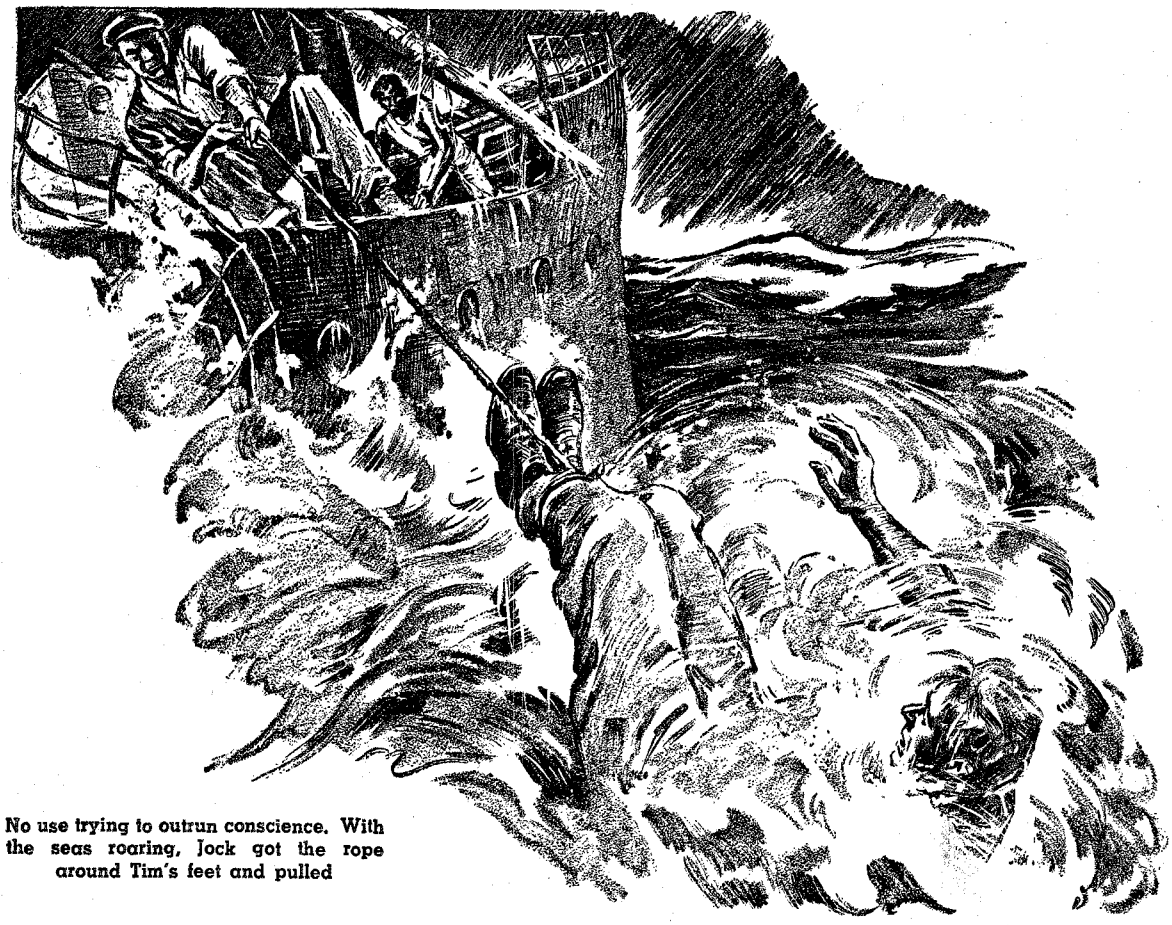

No use trying to outrun conscience. With the seas roaring, Jock got the rope around Tim's feet and pulled

"Where is he?" Tim roared. "Where's that blasted Scotchman?"

"In Rukuruku most likely," said Oska, tightening a red apron around his paunch. "He took a case of whiskey with him and charged it to you. You said you'd pay for anything he ordered."

"That weasel!" In a tirade of invective Tim expressed doubts as to the legality of Jock's birth, elaborated on his repulsive appearance and ended up with a sweeping condemnation of the entire Scottish race. "He must have switched drinks on me when I picked him off the floor!"

Oska nodded. "Before Jock left he said I should tell you never to put knock-out drops in a drink when there is a mirror in back of the bar. Someone is liable to see you do it."

"I'll get him!" snarled Trader Tim. "I'll get him yet!"

FROM that day on a wall of black hatred stood between the two men. The story of the drinking bout added fresh laurels to Jock's reputation and made Tim the butt of coarse jests from Samoa to the Solomons.

During the months that followed Tim lost over twenty pounds, and his hearty voice faded to a crafty whisper. He remained on Starbuck Island, working in the sugar mill sometimes, but always planning, plotting. Each week he demanded an official investigation of the *Mandarin's* log book to make certain that Jock had not accidentally run into Friday while crossing the date line.

But Jock was too clever to be caught. He always crossed from Thursday into Saturday at midnight, and no one could possibly prove different.

Tim made many attempts to keep the *Mandarin* from leaving Starbuck on Thursday. He tried to bribe the crew, he tried sabotage, he had fake calendars printed in Australia and mailed to Jock McWhirtle, he sent a native with the measles aboard the vessel and tried to get her quarantined. None of the schemes worked.

One Thursday, as Jock was preparing to cast off, Tim arrived on the dock with several suitcases and climbed the gangplank.

"Where d'ye think yurr goin'?" demanded Jock, bristling.

"To Rukuruku," Tim declared. "I've got a job working for the copra company."

"Ye'll na come aboard ma ship!"

Tim flaunted a pound note in his face. "Your contract with the copra company says that you must give their workers passage from one island to the other," he insisted. "I've a legal right to come aboard if I pay my passage."

"Verra well," said Jock reluctantly. "But ye'll stay in yurr cabin the en-tirre journey!"

"Suits me," glared Tim. "I'd rather lie in the bilge than stand on the same deck with you."

"Jock McWhirtle can at least hold his liquor," was the sneering reply. "I know a straw-headed windbag who canna say the same."

The passengers' cabin was on the starboard side of the bridge structure, and the captain's cabin was on the port side—the wheelhouse between them and a few feet forward. Because of the tropical heat the doors to both cabins had to be left open, enabling Jock and Tim to scowl across the alleyway at each other.

After clearing the harbor Jock crawled into his bunk for a nap. He was awakened by a terrific bedlam—the crash of cymbals, the brassy blaring of horns. The sound came from Tim's cabin. Darting into the alleyway, he saw a small radio in a wooden case resting on the upper

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bunk. A cord extended from the radio to the electric socket in the center of the ceiling.

"Where'd ye get that?" demanded Jock.

"From Australia," replied Tim. "It plays on any kind of a circuit. It's a great comfort to a man like me who enjoys music."

"'Tis na comfort to a mon who enjoys sleep!" yelled Jock. "Turrn it off!"

"Try and make me," said Tim defiantly. "I rented this cabin, and I'll—"

The ship gave a lurch to starboard, and Jock grabbed the side of the doorway for support. "Feels like a heavy sea," he muttered.

"It'll be heavier before we reach Rukuruku," Tim informed him. "If you hadn't spent all day in Oska's, you'd know that the barometer's been dropping. We're going to run into a stiff blow—maybe a hurricane!"

"So that's why ye came aboard!" shrilled Jock. "Ye knew the storrm was comin', an' ye didn't think I'd make it across the date line by midnight!"

"That's the idea," admitted Tim. "By midnight I'll be in command of my ship again, according to our agreement."

"I'll be damned if you will!" rasped Jock. He scooted into the wheelhouse and signaled to the engine room for full speed. The ship throbbed in every rivet; the radio continued to blare at top volume, mingling with the screech of a rising wind.

BEFORE long the sea had been moulded into mountainous swells which crashed over the ship's stubby bow, fell in cataracts over the welldeck and gushed out the scuppers. Each time the vessel buried her nose, the propeller leaped out of the water, churning air. Even at full speed the *Mandarin* was making only about four knots.

Jock stared at the chronometer. Eleven o'clock. According to the log indicator, the ship had gone twenty-nine miles since leaving Starbuck. Four more miles and she would be well across the date-line. If she kept up this speed, she'd make it.

The storm then howled down in its full fury. It swept the rails off the welldeck, ripped off the port bridge ladder and smashed the lifeboats in like eggshells. It came with a shrieking blast, stirring the waves until they seemed to grow higher than the mast tips. And above the wind, the roar of curling swells and the thud of the ship's engine came the full-throated wail of a lyric soprano.

"Turn off that blasted radio!" bawled Jock. "How can a mon concentrate with that racket?" He had taken the wheel himself and was trying to keep the ship headed due east. This was difficult because the wind and sea kept coming at him from different directions. One minute the waves pounded in from the north; the next minute, from the south or west. He had never seen such a storm.

Ensconced in his cabin Trader Tim twirled the radio dial and brought in a Japanese orchestra, which at best sounds like a catfight in a pantry. He chuckled with satisfaction as he heard Jock's agonized protest.

At eleven forty-five Jock checked the log again. According to closest computations, he had but half a mile to go before crossing the 180th meridian. The seconds ticked by—each one bringing Friday closer. Half a mile and he would be safe in the bosom of another Thursday. It was a race between the clock and the twirling log line.

At eight bells Trader Tim turned off his radio and entered the wheelhouse. He stood feet apart, swaying with the roll of the vessel, his broad mouth carved into a gargoyle-like grin.

"Twelve o'clock!" he announced boomingly. "Trader Tim takes command!"

"Oh, no," retorted Jock. "We passed the date-line five minutes ago. 'Tis still Thurrsday."

"I suppose you've been headed due east ever since we left Starbuck?" said Tim.

"Take a look at yon compass i' ye don't believe me."

"Take a look at it yourself," advised Tim.

Jock did, and his jaw sagged. "It canna be!" he gasped. "A moment ago we were headed east—an' now the compass reads sou'west!"

TIM threw his head back and roared like a happy hyena: a blood-curdling noise that was more vengeful than jovial. "I said I'd get you, you thistle-eyed mongrel!" he said, exposing two files of big shiny teeth. "Now you'll pay through the nose!"

"But I've been at the wheel, an' the direction was east!" insisted Jock. "Maybe we was jogged off our course a minute ago when the kanaka boy took the wheel."

"No," leered Tim. "That little radio I brought aboard contains a powerful electro-magnet which I made myself, using my knowledge of physics. I hid it in the radio so you wouldn't be suspicious when I plugged it into the light socket. The magnet is strong enough to pull any compass out of line at a short distance."

"You lie!" squawked Jock.

"When I turned the radio off, the compass swung back to its normal position," Tim continued gloatingly. "For the past two hours you've been steering around in circles, Jock McWhirtle—and *today is Friday!*"

"A lie! 'Tis Thurrsday!"

"Come on deck," Tim beckoned. "The sky is clear, and you can see the Southern Cross."

As he stepped outside an enormous wave sent the ship canting to starboard and smashed across the bridge deck with the roar of a falling building. When the wave subsided, Trader Tim was gone.

Jock stuck his head outside warily. Stripped of rails and stanchions, the bridge was a naked platform tilting precariously in mid-air. The sky was so packed with stars it looked like burnished platinum, but the sea was oily black and bulging with waves which resembled stalking ogres.

Above the moaning wind Jock could hear a distant voice yelling for help. Poking his head out a little further, he saw Tim dangling over the ship's side, hanging by both hands to a stanchion that had been bent out like a hairpin.

Swinging there, with the sea throwing angry claws at his heels, Tim had little hope of being rescued—after what had just happened. Muscles bulging, he tried to pull himself back to the bridge deck, then tried to reach the rail on the main deck with his feet. Both attempts were futile. The tendons in his arms ached painfully, and he could feel his strength ebbing.

Still he held on. To drop into the sea meant more than death; it meant defeat and the final triumph of Jock McWhirtle. Trader Tim was stubborn.

Jock was thinking the same thing, only in a different way. If Tim went down, the *Mandarin* was his forever. It was strictly against his better judgment to forfeit the

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ship and pay two hundred and fifty pounds for the privilege of rescuing his arch-enemy, a man who had called him a thistle-eyed mongrel. Such a sacrifice was too much to expect from any sensible person.

Furthermore there was a great personal risk involved. He might get washed overboard also.

"Na," said Jock aloud. "I will na do it!"

As he started to close the wheelhouse door, a great invisible hand shoved him onto the bridge. It was a shocking experience, for Jock had never known before that he possessed a conscience.

Instantly a wave knocked him to his knees. He grabbed the base of the range finder, waited for the water to swirl over him, and scrambled down to the main deck. Trader Tim's feet were dangling directly in front of him.

"Hold on!" he shouted. "I'll hae ye safe in a twinklin'!"

DIVING into a locker, he emerged with a loop of rope. By leaning far out over the rail he managed to draw the loop tight around Tim's ankles. He had just fastened the other end of the rope around a cleat when the ship heeled over again, and another torrent of seawater thundered across the decks. Jock seized a handrail and waited for the ship to right herself. Turning, he saw that Tim had disappeared. The rope was taut.

He braced his feet against a post and began to pull. Fighting against the roll of the ship, the constant rush of water, he heaved until his spine seemed ready to crack. Slowly, ponderously, Tim came up feet first, spouting water like a whale. One of the kanaka boys arrived in time to help drag him over the side.

"'Twas against ma better judgment," sighed Jock, surveying the inert lump of manhood which lay at his feet. "But as Bobbie Burrns said: 'A mon must let his conscience be his guide.'"

. . . When the *Mandarin* reached Rukuruku, Jock and Tim were in the captain's cabin glowering at each other over a whiskey bottle.

"You saved my life, and I'm grateful," said Tim sternly. "But the ship's mine again, and I want my two hundred and fifty pounds."

"Aye," nodded Jock. "I'll na go back on ma wurrd." He took a large leather purse from his pocket, clicked open the metal jaws and withdrew a roll of bills. After counting each one carefully, he handed the roll to Tim.

"Well," said Tim. "What are you going to do now?"

Jock shrugged. "I'll live a norrmal life again," he said. "'Twas beginnin' to bother me anyway, always losin' Friday. The Lorrd put seven days in the week, an' if He'd seen an advantage in havin' two Thursdays, He'd hae created two Thursdays. To keep avoidin' Friday is neither right nor natural."

He looked rather smug.

"There's money to be made in trocas shell," said Tim. "They're selling at thirty-eight pounds a ton. My credit's good in Australia, and I intend to buy another boat. Would you be interested in—er—forming a partnership? You handle the copra, and I'll handle the shells. After paying for the boat, we'll split the profits."

"Ye're askin' *me*—to be yurr partner?" gasped Jock.

"Not that I like you, understand," Tim said hastily. "But I'd rather have you as a partner than as a competitor."

"'Tis a strange wurrld," mused Jock. "The both of us plannin' to ruin each other, an' we end up as partners!"

"It's like your friend Bobbie Burns says," declared Tim. "'The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley.'"

"Ah, yes," said Jock knowingly. "Ye took the wurrds right out o' ma mouth."

Men Who Make the Argosy

Meet the Author — Crawford Sullivan

THE author of "No More Fridays" is a puzzling fellow; quite frankly, we don't know what to make of him. His stories are rich, full-bodied, vigorous. His characters speak their minds fully, often in quaint and engaging fashions. His humor—well, when an editor laughs out loud over a manuscript (not *at* it), that's something.

So when we ask him for information about himself—for the benefit of his public—we expect, maybe, a little biographical masterpiece: a lively, but sympathetic and thoughtful study of Sullivan the Man. History, reminiscence (ah, those nights in the fo'c'sle!), philosophy, humor. And what do we get?

About a hundred diffident words, set down telegraphic style. The bare bones of Crawford Sullivan.

For an interesting exercise in comparative styles (after the stories of his you've read) we give it to you here verbatim:

> Born thirty years ago in Peru, Indiana. Migrated to Hollywood, Calif. and have been here off and on for the past twenty years.
>
> Attended Stanford University and was released in the midst of the depression with a shiny diploma and no job. Went to sea, first as a wiper then as ordinary seaman. Returned home and worked for a while in a gas station, during which period I labored nights knocking out scripts for a radio show.
>
> Soon found the radio racket more remunerative than pumping gas and became a full-time writer. Decided to take a fling at magazine stories, sold my first one and have been at it ever since.
>
> Now married and have a four-month-old son named Stephen.
>
> Hobbies: Photography and putting a baited hook in the Pacific Ocean (to call it fishing would be stretching the truth).

SO THERE'S the report. One thing at least, is clear: Mr. Sullivan has reason to know what he's writing about when he writes about the sea. And we suspect (though he doesn't mention it) that he has spent part of his life as recording secretary for that great benevolent society of mariners, the Bilge and Binnacles.

Some day we may persuade Tug Raffin to write a story about Sullivan. *That* would be something!

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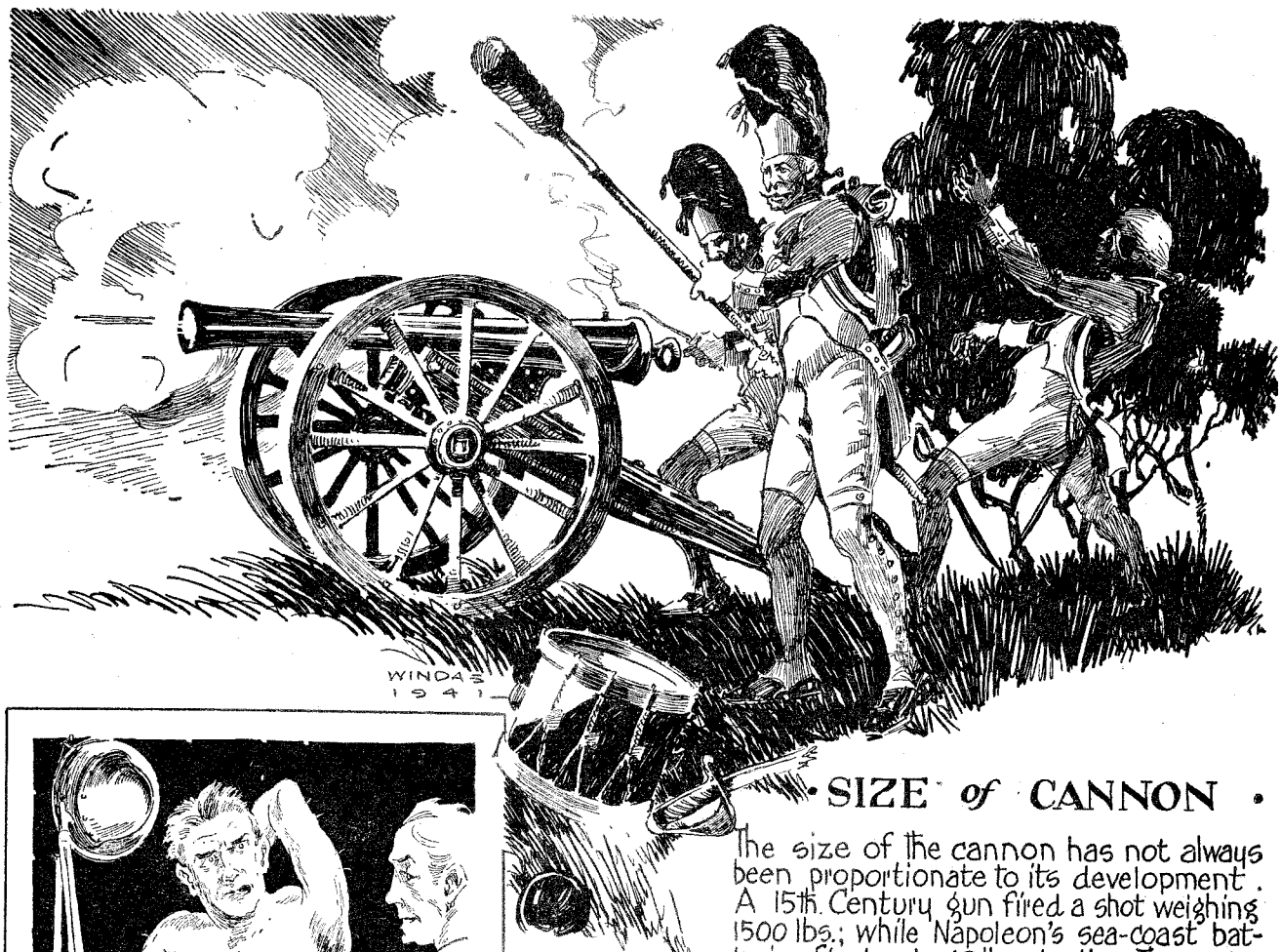
LEGENDS OF THE LEGIONARIES

ORIGINS OF THE CUSTOMS AND SAYINGS OF THE FIGHTING-MEN : by W·A·WINDAS



• SIZE of CANNON •

The size of the cannon has not always been proportionate to its development. A 15th. Century gun fired a shot weighing 1500 lbs.; while Napoleon's sea-coast batteries fired only 42 lb. missiles. The modern tendency, however, is to increase the size of artillery. (The 16 inch shell weighs over a ton.)

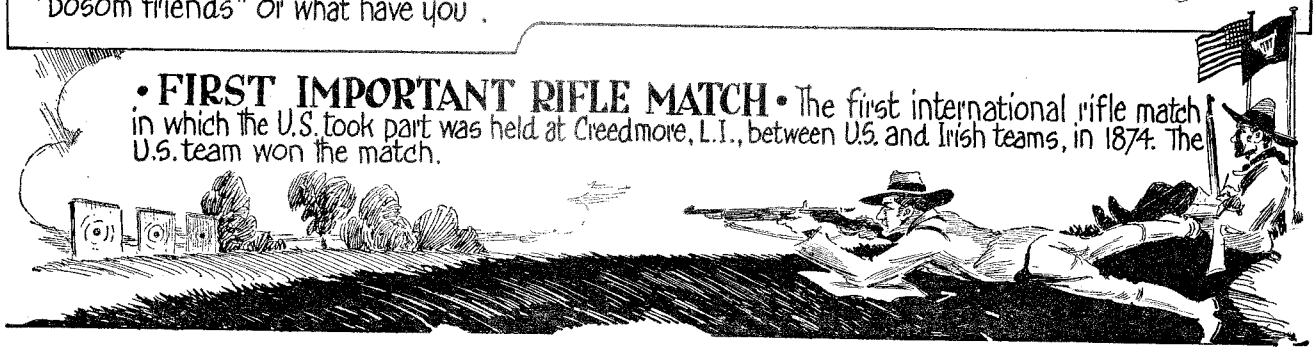
•MECHANIZED DANDRUFF•

Yes, this is the New War's name for what the boys of 1914-18 called "cooties" "bosom friends" or what have you.

• BLIGHTY •

The English Tommies' favorite name for the "tight little island" is "Blighty," a corruption of the Hindustani word "Bilati", meaning homeland.

• FIRST IMPORTANT RIFLE MATCH • The first international rifle match in which the U.S. took part was held at Creedmore, L.I., between U.S. and Irish teams, in 1874. The U.S. team won the match.



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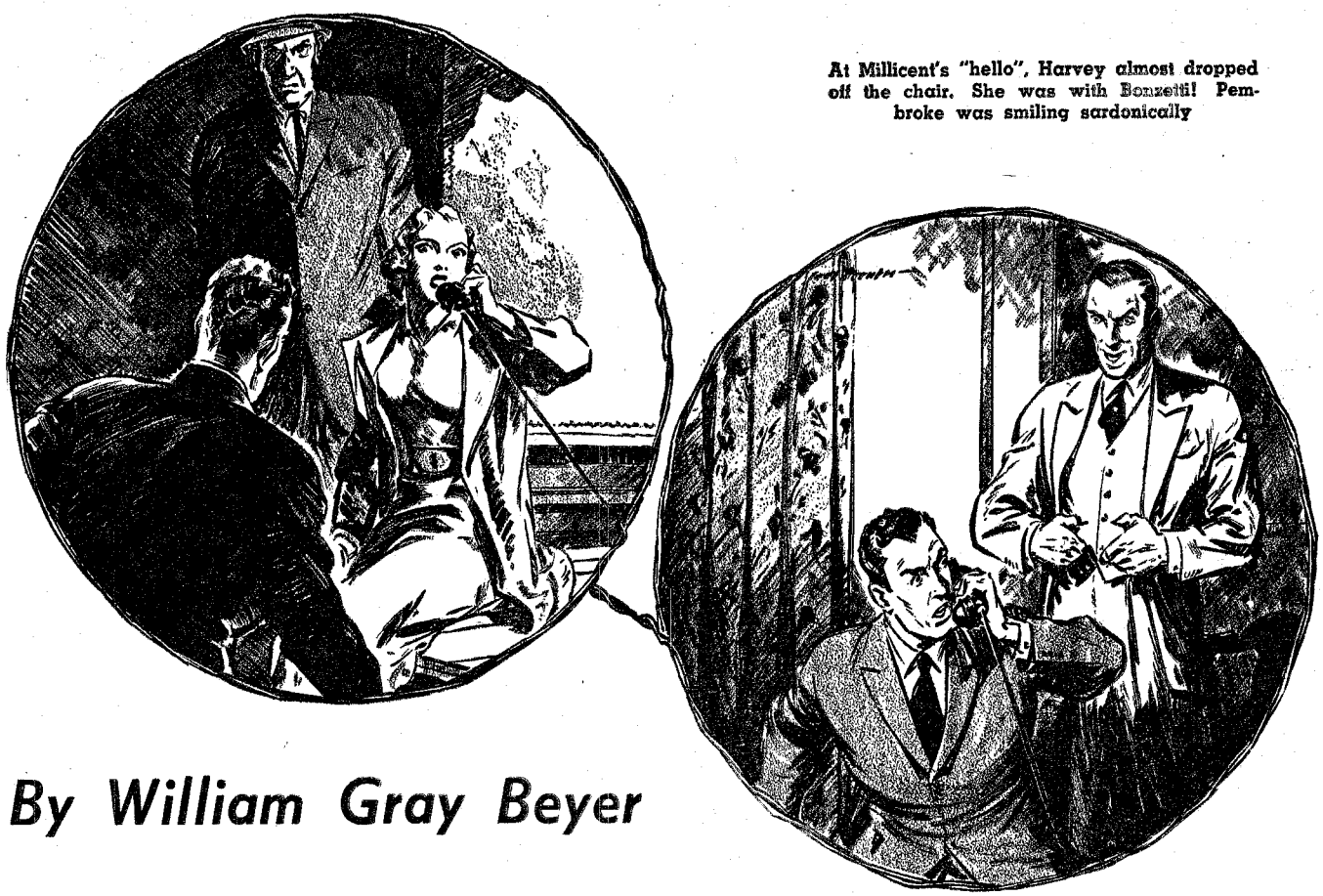

At Millicent's "hello", Harvey almost dropped off the chair. She was with Bonzetti! Pembroke was smiling sardonically

By William Gray Beyer

Minions of the Shadow

MARK NEVINS, who submitted to a too-powerful anesthetic and slept for six thousand years, has persuaded his cosmic playboy friend OMEGA to take him back to his twentieth-century home town for a visit.

Omega, last of the race of Moon Men, is a prankish disembodied intelligence which—*who* can assume any shape he pleases. Making himself and Mark invisible, he lands them both in the middle of a murder scene: a murder involving Mark's old friend of six thousand years ago, HARVEY NELSON.

Persuaded to take a flyer at revising history in order to clear Nelson, Omega now takes Mark back before the murder, to pick up the thread of the thing. And they find that Mark's friend is already in trouble up to his neck.

Harvey, leader of the fifty-second ward and a county commissioner, is an honest and unsuspecting fellow; and PEMBROKE, the local political boss, is using him as a fall guy until Omega breaks the news. Introducing himself as Nelson's shadow, Omega tries to persuade Nelson to cut himself in on the graft; but Nelson, incurably honest, decides to clean up the local situation.

So he sets to work, and Omega is at his elbow every minute, whether Harvey likes it or not.

As a candidate for mayor he chooses his old friend FOWLER, a long-time stooge of Pembroke's who has finally been led to see the error of his ways. Pembroke, surprisingly enough, agrees to the choice; but Nelson isn't fooled. Fowler has already discovered that the boss is planning to have BONZETTI, a local racketeer, kidnap Nelson and keep him out of the way until after elections.

Instead of worrying about the snatch, Nelson is anxious for it to happen; for—providing he can escape—it will give him a weapon to use in breaking Pembroke's power. But there's still more dirt he can get on the party leader.

With his fiancee, MILLICENT FORBES—and Omega, the demon chaperone, in tow—Nelson visits JOE PATELLI, night club operator, and persuades him to collect evidence of graft paid to Pembroke in the past by a variety of men now gone legitimate.

While they are talking in Patelli's night club, Nelson spots DANVERS, Pembroke's original candidate for mayor; and Omega, having read Danvers' mind, comes up with some interesting information. The politician has lost a paper containing incriminating evidence; and he suspects DOLLY PATTERSON, his blonde companion, of having stolen it for blackmail.

Nelson and Millicent follow the pair to the blonde's apartment, and are told that Danvers has already left after seeing her home. Dolly doesn't answer her door when they ring; but when Millicent tries the door it opens, and they walk in.

Dolly Patterson is lying on the floor, murdered.

Omega can't help them now; he has suddenly faded. Here, in the spot where they first discovered Nelson, the cosmic playboy confesses to Nevins that he is getting weaker every minute they stay in the past. Now he's even afraid *he is going to merge with Nelson. . . .*

CHAPTER XV

HOW DO YOU KILL A SHADOW?

"CALL the room clerk," Harvey said. "Tell him to phone the police immediately. I'm going to take a quick look around. Those lists may be in this room!"

Millicent got control of herself sufficiently to obey, then

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turned from the phone to help him. But Harvey didn't need any help; he was standing in the middle of the room looking helplessly around him. And then Millicent saw what, in the shock of finding the body, just hadn't registered before—the room had already been ransacked!

It was obvious that the desk, the most likely place to look, had been searched first. Its contents hadn't been scattered so much; obviously the searcher had not been in a great hurry when he searched it.

The bedroom, however, revealed that the searcher had been getting panicky. He had emptied the bureau drawers on the bed, then had pulled the mattress on the floor and searched it, letting the stuff fall where it might. And the bathroom—with contents of the medicine case scattered everywhere—showed that the searcher had become positively frantic toward the end.

And it all added up to one thing: whoever had made that search hadn't found what he was looking for—in other words, the lists that Danvers had lost and wanted back. Harvey was willing to bet on that; for it was the desk that had been searched first. His eyes strayed to the inert form of Dolly Patterson. There was the answer! The one place the murderer hadn't looked.

Millicent gasped as she saw Harvey carefully step to the side of the body, avoiding the crimson stains, and bend over it. He appeared to ponder for a brief instant; then he began to explore the tops of the stockings. At length he stood up again; Millicent watched him with narrowed eyes as he examined the three tightly-folded papers he now held.

"Knew right where to go!" she observed rather tartly.

Harvey had no chance to answer, for at that moment a step sounded outside the door. It opened and three men came in, the foremost being a large, ruddy-faced individual who looked very much like a policeman, but happened to be the medical examiner. He immediately proved it by examining the body.

The second—small, dapper and sporting a close-clipped mustache across his upper lip—looked very much like a professional man, but was actually a lieutenant in the homicide squad. The third was O'Reilly, of the state police, in civilian clothes.

"Hya, Mr. Nelson," said O'Reilly. "Fancy meeting—"

"Shut up!" said the dapper man. "I told you to keep quiet if you wanted to come along. You know these people?"

"How can I answer and shut up, too?" demanded O'Reilly.

"Answer first, shut up afterward," said the smaller man. "Who are they?"

O'Reilly introduced Nelson, sulkily. The lieutenant, he said, was named Schwartz.

"Now shut up," advised Lieutenant Schwartz. He changed his scowl to a grin, aimed at Harvey. "These state coppers are always butting in, Mr. Nelson. Got to put them in their place. That your wife?"

"Not yet," said Harvey, and introduced Millicent.

"How'd it happen?" asked Schwartz next.

"Can't say," answered Harvey. "I think the room clerk will tell you we called him as soon as we got up here."

"He already did," said Schwartz. "Just thought I'd ask. What d'ya say, doc?"

THE beefy medical man groaned slightly as he rose to his feet. "Struck over the head and knocked unconscious," he said musingly. "Died a few minutes later."

Schwartz looked astounded. "Doc," he pleaded. "Didn't you notice she had her throat cut? Or did she bite herself as she fell?"

"Fractured skull," said the medical man, slowly. "That's what she died of. Struck from behind. Landed on her face, judging from that bruise on her cheek. Later she was turned over and her throat cut. That blood seeped out; it wasn't pumped out by a heart which was still beating. The quantity, as well as the distribution, proves that. If she'd been alive when the throat was cut, the blood would be all over the place, instead of just around her neck. Be more of it too."

Schwartz shook his head sadly. "Had to be sure, I guess. However. . . How long's she been dead?"

"About an hour, roughly."

"All right. Now, Nelson, how'd you happen to come here and find her?"

"Miss Patterson was in the company of a man I wanted to talk to," Harvey explained. "Having been told that he might be here, I asked the room clerk downstairs. He told me that Miss Patterson had left him at the elevator in the lobby and that he had then left the place. I thought she might know where he had gone, so I came up to ask her."

"He left the place, eh? Who was he?"

"Daniel Danvers," said Harvey.

"The politician, eh? Now what else do you know about this Dolly Patterson? Her friends and otherwise."

"Can't help you," said Harvey. "An hour ago I didn't even know her name. I only learned it when I inquired where Danvers might be. Is there anything else? Miss Forbes is suffering from shock. I'd like to take her home."

Schwartz scratched his chin and pondered for a minute. "No," he finally said. "Thanks a lot for your help. But keep yourself available in case I need you."

"Omega! Stay here and work on this man Schwartz! Don't go!"

"Gotta go. I can't leave Harvey till I get more strength. It took all I had to get back. Stay with me, or you'll find yourself back at the creek!"

MILLICENT was silent all the way down the elevator and through the lobby. She didn't open her mouth until the door of a cab slammed shut on them, and he absently took the coveted lists from his pocket. Neither of them noticed that a second cab pulled away from the curb directly behind theirs.

"Harvey Nelson!" she said. "I don't know what to make of you."

Harvey looked up from his perusal of the papers. "What's the matter?" he asked, slightly confused. "She didn't mind."

Millicent sighed in exasperation. "I don't mean her. She wouldn't have minded anyway. I was referring to your underhand trick back in that room. Oh, don't look so innocent. You know you mentioned Danvers' name on purpose. Was that fair?"

Harvey chuckled. "Can't withhold information from the police," he told her. "How do I know but what he might provide the lead which will catch the murderer? Besides, I had to explain why we were there. I couldn't mention these lists."

Millicent slumped back in her seat. "I still don't know what to make of you," she said, wearily. "For the past two days you've been a different man entirely."

"Listen, sweetheart," Harvey pleaded. "Things are happening fast, and I've been inattentive because my mind is in a whirl. When we get everything straightened out I'll make it up to you. Right now all I can think of is to get Fowler elected and clean house in this town."

"Sort of a military objective, eh? You're so single-minded about it that you'll even withhold information which might bring a murderer to justice." *Sniff!*

"Milly!" he said, reproachfully. "I couldn't tell Schwartz about these papers. All I know myself is what Omega told me. And he learned it by reading Danvers' and Dolly's minds. If I told him what I know, he wouldn't believe me.

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And unless he knew the whole story those lists would just cause a lot of trouble without doing any good. But I can put them to excellent purpose."

Millicent didn't seem to be listening. She hunched over in her seat and smiled up at him coyly.

"I love you just the same," she confided. Then she hesitated before she whispered: "Is Omega still asleep?"

Harvey gathered her in his arms and kissed her tenderly. "I almost forgot him," he said. "Do you know this is the first time we've been really alone since he arrived? We ought to do something about it . . ."

Millicent snuggled closer, but said nothing.

"Yes," repeated Harvey. "We should do something about it. We can't have him plaguing us all our lives. Didn't you say you had an idea on the subject?"

Millicent stared directly in front for a long minute. Then: "He's a shadow," said Millicent. "And no matter how dark it is there's always enough light for him. But suppose there were light, blinding light, on all sides of you? Where would he be then?"

Harvey pondered. "Gone, I guess," he answered. "But he's been gone several times. And he always comes back."

"So you told me. But on those times he's only been asleep. My idea is that if he were suddenly subjected to intense light from all directions, while he's in full possession of his faculties, maybe he would be shocked back to normal. He might become a decent respectable shadow, the way he was before he came to life."

Harvey didn't answer for a while. When he did his voice was very sober.

"I don't think I could bring myself to do it," he said. "If he didn't show up again I'd always think of myself as a murderer. He *is* alive, you know."

CHAPTER XVI

COME NOW, MR. BONZETTI!

THE cab pulled up in front of Millicent's apartment house, and Harvey was silent as they rode up in the elevator. Millicent, apparently sad about the turn of affairs, was lost in her thoughts. Neither saw the trouble the elevator boy was experiencing with his controls, but they were jarred back to the present when the cage slammed against the top of the shaft.

"Darn it, Mr. Nelson," complained the operator. "You'll get me in trouble doing that. Don't you know it's after midnight? I'm liable to lose—"

He turned his head as he talked, and suddenly gasped. For Harvey was on the other side of the elevator. Millicent was between him and the controls.

"Oh I'm sorry, Mr. Nelson," the boy hastened to apologize. "I could have sworn . . . It *must* be this lever. It won't move!"

The boy wrenched at the lever, and suddenly it swung back and dropped the car. Harvey handed the boy a bill and told him to refer his boss to him, if anything was said about the noise. He'd vouch for the fact that the lever had jammed.

"Just wanted you to know that I was around all the time," whispered Omega. "I heard what you said."

He didn't make any other comment, and Harvey was suddenly too weary to answer. He kissed Millicent goodnight and promised her that as soon as he cleared up the matter of the election, he'd put his colossal intellect to work on the other problem. She went into her apartment looking a bit happier. A whole lot happier, in fact, than Harvey felt.

He went down in the elevator, while the operator watched him furtively—and somewhat suspiciously. Harvey didn't notice him. He was still deep in thought as he climbed into a taxi at the curb. Too engrossed, by far, to notice that a second cab again followed immediately after.

"What are you going to do?" came the voice in Harvey's brain.

"Go back to Patelli's," growled Harvey, half aloud.

"I don't mean that," said Omega. "I mean about me. Are you going to try the light trick?"

"Will it work?" countered Harvey.

There was a long silence. Then, "I don't know. It might."

"Why did you ask?" Harvey suddenly inquired. "I thought you could read my mind."

"So I can, to a certain extent. But lately I find it's getting harder. You've built up a resistance against my probing. It's easier to ask, now."

PATELLI was in his private office when Harvey arrived. Spread on a desk before him were several notebooks, varying in size from small memo books to one large ledger.

"I hope these will help," he said. "But listen: this stuff is dynamite, so don't let it get out of your hands. Take what pages you want and give me back the rest."

Harvey blinked rapidly at some of the names entered in the books. But he resolutely passed over the portions which didn't apply to the party donations. These men were trusting him not to see too much, and it wouldn't help a bit to doublecross them.

Some of the names he noticed, and the items recorded beside them, would have raised hob if ever made public. Harvey wasn't interested. He had an objective, and he was sticking to it. He took a sharp penknife from his pocket and cut out a page which dealt with party donations over a period of several months.

In another ledger he found relevant items, and removed a page by snapping clips in the binding. One other book had loose-leaf pages, and he removed three from it. The rest required the penknife.

When he was finished there were ten pages in a pile, all dealing with payments made to the party fund, by men who had wished to continue their illegitimate vocations. In each case the payments had increased in amount, from month to month, as Pembroke had become greedier and greedier.

The top sums, when the payments ceased, represented the point known as All the Traffic Will Bear. The next increase, Harvey deduced, was the one which had put the man out of business. Pembroke had become too greedy. He hadn't known where to stop.

"These, coupled with some other stuff, will lick Pembroke," he told Patelli. "Give my thanks to the men who handed them over. I'll return them some time tomorrow." He glanced at his wrist watch. "Today, I mean."

A man who had been listening outside the door barely dodged back in the shadows as Harvey came out, tucking a long envelope in his inside pocket. The man followed at a discreet distance as Harvey left the club, once more entering a taxi. He dashed for the next one in line and ordered the driver to follow.

There was a mystified expression on the man's windburned face, and also a trace of determination. Even the fact that his supply of ready cash was being woefully depleted with all this cab riding failed to lessen this doggedness. He resolved that if the man in the cab ahead went too far with such extravagance, he would keep on his trail by hopping on the bumper when he started off.

The first cab stopped in the middle of a block. He hastily ordered his own driver to stop some distance behind. He fished in a pocket and brought forth a notebook. He rapidly thumbed through it until he came to the right page.

"Hell," he grunted, half aloud. "That's where he lives. I better get some sleep myself. And some dough, too."

A few minutes later he was carefully setting an alarm

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clock for seven o'clock, four hours hence. Thence he laid his clothes where he could jump into them in a hurry, and went to sleep.

HARVEY opened the street door to his quarters, and fixed the latch so the door could be opened without a key. Then he sprinted up the flight of stairs and did likewise with the door at the top.

A second later he was at the window, peering up the street. He was rewarded by the sight of a taxi driving off. He smiled grimly and seated himself in an easy chair beside a small writing desk. Still in the dark he opened a drawer and removed an efficient army automatic.

Harvey hadn't missed seeing the man who had dodged aside when he left Patelli's. He had also seen him trail his cab. And now, Harvey decided, the man was on his way back to report to Bonzetti that his victim was safely in his flat.

Harvey smiled again, and patted the gun in his hand. He didn't intend to take a chance on letting himself be kidnaped now. With enough evidence to force a confession out of Danvers, there was no need for it.

He settled back further in the chair and waited. His eyes tried to droop, but he forced them to stay open. It wouldn't do to have Bonzetti barge in and find him asleep.

The only trouble with trying to stay awake in the dark was the fact that his eyelids could close and he wouldn't know it. He lit a cigarette. It scorched his finger a minute later, and he put it out. He wondered vaguely if a man could fall asleep with his eyes open. It was dark anyway. Did eyelids have to be closed in order to sleep?

"Can't you get away yet?"

"No. Tried a couple times. Too weak. You're to blame for this! Suppose I have to live through this man's whole lifetime, stuck here in the past?"

"You're really his shadow now, eh? Haven't you strength enough to send me to watch Schwartz? That might help."

"No. It's all I can do to keep you here. Maybe if I let you drift back to your own time, I'd have strength enough to release myself from Harvey, though. I'll try that if I can't get loose."

"Don't do that! Harvey's about to be kidnaped! Stay with him and help out. He's in real trouble. And you're to blame for that. Don't forget it."

"How in the name of— All right. I'm to blame for it. But that don't say I'm going to stay here the rest of his life and watch over him. He's big enough . . ."

CHAPTER XVII

MILLY'S CHILLY

MILLICENT FORBES was a nice girl. She had put up a pretense of being happy and contented with Harvey's promise to put his mind down to the problem of Omega. That was only because she *was* a nice girl and didn't want to worry him. He had enough worries.

But as a matter of fact Millicent wasn't happy at all. She was miserable—as Harvey could have easily seen if he hadn't been on the opposite side of her door when she closed it. For Millicent slumped wearily in a chair and gazed blankly at the wall. Tears welled up in her eyes and she angrily blinked them out. Unheeded then, they furrowed a way through her lightly-applied makeup.

She listened to the clang of the elevator doors and went into the bedroom. She spent some time undressing, washing and applying creams, but the ritual failed to cheer her as it usually did.

Harvey's promise, for the first time since she could remember, wasn't much good. The very fact that he postponed the solution to that problem revealed that he hadn't the slightest hope that anything could be done about it. Procrastination wasn't one of his faults. When Harvey had a problem, he went after it immediately.

The thing was fantastic anyway. Shadows were impalpable things, not given to talking back. Where you went, they went, and never argued about it. But something had happened, something completely outside the realm of human understanding.

For Harvey's shadow was really alive, and decidedly frisky. She couldn't ignore it—or him, as this shadow must properly be designated. As a husband Harvey would be impossible—unless something were done.

Millicent climbed into bed and pulled up the covers. The pillow felt cool; then after a minute, slightly damp. Annoyed, she wiped her eyes and turned it over. Sternly she forced her mind into other channels, determined to forget all about it and go to sleep.

That, of course, was a mistake. Sleep can't be bullied. And besides her mind refused to co-operate. It returned to Harvey of its own volition.

For three years she had loved him, sometimes almost hopelessly. She had admired his kindness and the idealistic view he took of everything around him. Lately he had changed, losing some of his trustfulness and replacing it with a better insight into the motives of those he associated with.

But his ideals were still there. Intensified, if anything. She loved him more for the change; for it had enabled him to get up the nerve to propose. He had lost some of his shyness, the thing which had kept him from the step before.

Millicent half believed that Omega had something to do with it all, though she couldn't be sure. If he had, then she owed him a debt. And that thought brought her back to her main problem. Harvey had said that he had come to regard his encumbrance as another human, an entity which couldn't be eliminated without destroying a life. He had even come to develop a certain fondness for him.

And now that she thought it over, Millicent wasn't so sure that it *wouldn't* be murder ruthlessly to destroy Omega —providing, of course, that it could be done at all. He *was* a likable cuss at that.

Sleep finally came, though it was fitful at first and broken by dreams of Omega interfering all through the years to come. When she woke there was still the feeling of futility and sorrow which had gripped her when she had said goodnight to Harvey. For several seconds she lay in bed, staring at nothing, trying to get her thoughts in order. Until a gentle rap sounded at the door.

Hastily donning a housecoat, she answered, opening the door a few inches. A heavy man in a business suit smiled at her. He flipped open the lapel of his coat and Millicent caught a fleeting look at a shield.

"Headquarters," said the man. "Lieutenant Schwartz would like to have you sign a statement. Mr. Nelson is over there now. I've got a car downstairs if you'd like to come right away."

"I'll be ready in a jiffy," she said, opening the door wider. "Make yourself comfortable while I dress. There's liquor in the cabinet."

The man's eyes widened as he accepted the invitation. "Lady," he said as she disappeared into the bedroom, "you're a gentleman."

He managed to slug down four drinks out of a brown bottle, and was eyeing a green bottle distrustfully and trying to decipher certain words in Italian on the label, when she reappeared, fully dressed.

At first Millicent didn't notice that the car was already occupied. The man who sat in the back seat was in shadow and wore a dark suit. It was too late to jump out when she did see him, for he had a pistol pointed at her.

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She did hesitate, but he reached out the other hand and pulled her the rest of the way inside. The door slammed behind her.

"I always have to supervise these things myself," he said, conversationally. "That's why Lucky Bonzetti stays out of jail. Get goin', Barney."

MILLICENT sighed and relaxed in the seat. She clucked sympathetically. "It is a bore, isn't it? Not being able to depend on your hired help."

Bonzetti nodded. "Yeah," he agreed. "Understand, they're dependable. They won't cross me up, or anything. But they're dumb. They ain't smart, like Lucky Bonzetti. They make mistakes, and that's bad in my business."

"Where are we going?" asked Millicent.

"A nice place, toots. You'll like it, though you'll only be there for a few weeks."

"Only a few weeks?"

"Sure, sure. Just till after the primaries."

Millicent nodded calmly, as if the matter were quite the usual thing. "I thought it was something like that," she said.

"Say, you're pretty cool, ain't you." Bonzetti observed. "That's the way I like 'em. Saves a lot of trouble."

"Oh, I wouldn't want to be any trouble," said Millicent. "I know it's all a matter of business. Nothing personal."

Bonzetti nodded and looked at her admiringly. "That's the proper attitude. I wish more people realized that, instead of getting all excited and raising a fuss."

Millicent idly watched the city flow past the car window and noted that they were approaching the edge of town. She could see through the glass of the door, obliquely, but well enough to recognize the route. There weren't any windows at the sides of the back seat, and the curtain was pulled down over the rear window.

To a person outside the car both she and Bonzetti were probably invisible in the shadows. Bonzetti at least made no attempt to conceal his gun. She noticed that he kept it pointed in her general direction, in spite of her docile manner. She had hoped that he would relax, but the scheme didn't work. Bonzetti was smart.

The car reached the edge of the city and continued, picking up speed. Then it slowed suddenly and turned into a side road. After a short distance it stopped under a tree.

"I guess you won't object to a blindfold," Bonzetti ventured. "Part of the business, you know."

"Not at all," said Millicent, agreeably. "Be careful with my hair, though. It's a new wave."

The gangster covered her eyes effectively with a black silk handkerchief, carefully tying it in the back under her curls. "You're pretty good, you are," he declared. "How'd you ever come to hook up with a guy like Harvey Nelson?"

"Oh, he has his points," said Millicent. "Though at times he *is* hard to get along with. He's always banging his head against a stone wall. Like trying to make politicians give the public a break. It can't be done."

"You said it," agreed Bonzetti. "But I figure he ought to have had more sense than to buck Pembroke. That guy'd doublecross his own mother."

MILLICENT was silent for a moment, thinking about the excuse which had brought her out of her apartment. No doubt Bonzetti had read about the murder in the morning papers and decided it would make a good story to get her to come peaceably. And then again . . .

"That business in Dolly Patterson's apartment," she began. "Was that one of your jobs? I thought it was pretty neat. There didn't seem to be a clue, except that the place had been searched thoroughly."

Bonzetti's eyes narrowed. Millicent couldn't see that, of course, but she sensed that the man beside her had tensed a bit. There was a pause before he answered, and when he did there was a different tone to his voice. It was slightly colder, less affable and friendly.

"Thoroughly, eh? Then you figure the one who searched it found what he was looking for?"

Millicent didn't answer right away. Not because she didn't know what to say, but because she was trying to keep her mind straight on the number of turns the car had made since she had been blindfolded. She gave it up, though, for she suddenly realized that some of them had been natural turns of a winding country road, and that she couldn't be sure which ones were actual changes to another road. It didn't matter anyway. Knowing where she was wouldn't help her escape.

"I don't know," she answered. "He might have found it in the last place he looked. Then again he mightn't have."

"I get it," said Bonzetti, suddenly thawing. "If the place had only been half searched, you could be sure the guy found it. Or maybe was scared before he finished. So it looks to me like he didn't find it. And I bet I know the answer!"

"What?"

"Your boy friend found the papers! Right?"

"Papers? What papers?"

Bonzetti laughed, apparently very pleased. "Never mind," he chuckled. "I got it all now. This Dolly had swiped some papers off Danvers. Why, I don't know. But it's a good chance that they were bad business for Pembroke. Because he asked me to put the dame on the spot and get them back. But my price being too high, he said he'd get somebody else. And that somebody else botched the job!" Bonzetti finished with another roar of laughter.

There was comparative silence for a few minutes, broken only by the whine of tires which had moved onto a stretch of concrete or some other smooth surface, and by the occasional chuckle of Bonzetti. He was probably having a lot of fun thinking about the results of Pembroke's hiring a less able agent to do his dirty work. Millicent began to get fidgety.

"Where are we going?" she asked again.

"A nice place, like I said," Bonzetti insisted. "Say, I was just thinking; we're going to be cooped up for quite a while. . ."

Millicent groaned inwardly. "And you've got ideas, of course," she observed.

"Why not? I've sorta taken a shine to you. You seem to be a pretty sensible fem, and—"

THE car gave a sudden jolt as it turned abruptly up a rough country lane. Bonzetti grabbed a strap at his side and placed his gun in its holster. For a couple of minutes it was necessary for both of them to keep their jaws tightly clenched to prevent biting off their tongues. Then came a surging stop which almost threw them from the seat.

"Here we are, boss," came Barney's cheerful voice. "That road needs a going over."

"*You* need a going over," rasped Bonzetti. "If you ever give me a ride like that again, I'll make you drink a gallon of nitro and then I'll push you off City Hall!"

"I hate to slow down, boss," Barney said, lamely. "Sorry if I—"

Bonzetti made a vicious pass, but allowed it to fall just short of Barney's jaw. This was another evidence of his brainiess; for if Barney had actually been struck, his slow-moving brain might not have worked in time to prevent him from hitting back. And that would have been bad for morale, especially if he had flattened his boss. And that probably is what would have happened, Barney being about fifty pounds heavier.

Bonzetti's rage evaporated as he looked at Millicent. His face softened and then looked regretful. Still being

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careful of her curls, he untied the blindfold. She blinked at the sudden light and then smiled.

"I'm outa the mood now," he stated. "I'll talk to you later. Besides, I got an important phone call to make."

Bonzetti turned and entered a stone bungalow which set back from the driveway. A large calloused hand took Millicent's elbow.

"Don't mind him, sister," said Barney. "He always has them moods. Now me, I'm different. I'm always in the mood, come to think of it. So don't go pining away. . ."

"I wasn't pining away," Millicent assured him. "I was merely looking at the house. It does seem to be a nice place. Shall we go in?"

Bonzetti had put through his telephone call. He turned and beckoned as she entered the living room. "It's your boy friend," he said, chuckling. "Tell him I'm going to take good care of you."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LIFE OF O' REILLY

HARVEY woke up with a splitting headache, and vaguely wondered why. Then he suddenly remembered. He jumped to his feet and looked at his watch. Eight o'clock. He hadn't been kidnaped after all! He might just as well have gone to bed. A dozen aches in a dozen muscles amplified the thought.

Hastily he stripped off his rumpled clothes and headed for the bathroom. He winced as stabs of pain shot through his head, but there wasn't much he could do about it. A cup of coffee, when he got time for it, would fix the headache. In the meantime. . .

He fumbled in a medicine closet for a moment and pulled out a bottle filled with a brownish liquid. There was a skull and crossed bones on the label, but that didn't deter him in the least. He tilted it, pouring every last drop down his throat.

"What's the skull for?" Omega asked.

Harvey started, guiltily. "I'd forgotten you," he said, a bit unsteadily. "That's to indicate poison, so nobody will drink it by mistake."

"You drank it," Omega pointed out.

"Not by mistake," Harvey said, dashing cold water on his face. "I drank it on purpose."

"Then it's not poison, except by mistake, eh?"

Harvey dried himself briskly. "I've got friends," he explained, laboriously. "They drink everything in sight sometimes. But they won't drink poison. Therefore I always have an eye-opener left when I wake up. I'll refill that, first chance I get, with the finest poison on the market."

Harvey was changing clothes as he talked, and occasionally casting a glance at the clock. He finished hurriedly, and headed for the door.

"Wait a minute," came Omega's wail. ""I want my duds, too."

Harvey groaned. "Not this time, please," he said. "I've got to get a confession out of Danvers and I haven't much time. Please!"

There was a silence during which Harvey quaked inwardly and involuntarily braced himself against a punch in the stomach. Finally Omega said, "All right. I don't want to cause any trouble." He sounded so dejected that Harvey almost told him to get dressed, but he caught himself in time and strode out the door.

He didn't call a taxi, but instead headed for a repair shop a block away. His car was in running order, the bumper straightened and the blown tire replaced. He drove off feeling much better. His headache was tapering off; a cup of coffee would erase it completely if he could find time for one. The morning air and the urgency of the work to be done had sharpened his mind and made him forget his other problems.

If he could have seen the grim though slightly bewildered face in the following cab, he mightn't have felt so chipper.

THE man in the cab didn't feel so chipper himself. His four hours of sleep, instead of the usual nine or ten, made him somewhat gloomy. He was beginning to wonder if he wasn't on a wild goose chase.

Not that his determination had faltered; not in the least. He was going to see this thing through. But up to the present he couldn't see where he was doing much good. Maybe he should have called in some wiser heads on this quest. Maybe he didn't have the brain for this kind of work.

He tried to piece together some sense from the things he had learned. Somehow they didn't seem to add up. He'd seen Nelson take his girl home. That didn't mean anything. He'd seen him get some papers from Patelli, night club operator and former gambler. That meant something, all right, but he hadn't the slightest idea what. If he only knew what those papers were. . .

The car ahead finally stopped at a pretentious place, set back from the road, almost at the edge of town. The windburnt man left the cab and followed. He saw a chance to approach the house unobserved, by taking advantage of the copious shrubbery which surrounded it. He peeked in the windows from time to time, and was finally rewarded by the sight of Nelson entering the library, followed by a middle-aged, prosperous-looking man with a worried look on his dignified face.

The man at the window jumped involuntarily. He knew that face; it belonged to Dan Danvers, party treasurer and a man who had been mentioned as possible mayor. Danvers looked decidedly worried as he slumped in an armchair. Nelson stood over him and banged his fist on a table as if he were threatening him.

The man wished he could hear what was going on. It would have solved the mystery, he was sure.

Nelson seemed to be talking volumes, and getting red in the face as he talked. Danvers slumped further in the chair as he listened. Finally he got up and crossed the room to a desk, which he opened.

The angle was bad but the man at the window interpreted what he saw to mean that Danvers was writing something, and that Nelson was dictating it. He could only see Danvers' back from this angle, but it was hunched over as when a man is writing.

Finally Danvers straightened; Nelson leaned over and picked up a paper. He was smiling triumphantly as he did this, and the windburnt man thought it high time to get back to his cab.

Harvey was still smiling when he returned to his car. He didn't notice as he drove off towards Pembroke's offices that a cab was doing its very best to keep up with him. Harvey was driving at quite a clip, and the cab had been built more for endurance than for speed.

"I don't blame Milly for saying you've changed," remarked Omega. "You used to drive like a snail with arthritis."

"There's work to be done," chortled Harvey. "How did you like the way I handled Danvers?"

"Couldn't have done better myself," Omega admitted. "You're a changed man. A week ago he could have denied the whole thing—called it an optical illusion—and you'd have believed him."

"Hardly that bad," said Harvey, pulling up in front of the Bugle building. "Though I'll admit I was a little scared for a minute or two that he wouldn't bluff."

There was a slight altercation behind Harvey as he

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started into the building. A cab had pulled up and let out a passenger who didn't like the size of his bill and wasn't hesitating about saying so. But Harvey had other things on his mind and didn't turn. He continued toward the bank of elevators.

"Mr. Nelson! Mr. Nelson!" came an urgent voice behind him.

"Hello, O'Reilly," said Harvey. "Where are you going?"

"With you." O'Reilly said it defiantly, as if challenging any possible denial of his right to do so.

HARVEY looked puzzled, but nodded; headed for the building's lunch room. He sat down on a stool and ordered coffee, black. He nodded again, absently, as O'Reilly lifted two fingers to the waiter behind the counter. But when the waiter delivered the two cups, he snapped out of his reverie and suddenly asked, "Why?"

O'Reilly was confused for a second, as his face plainly revealed, but rallied determinedly.

"I'm working on that Dolly Patterson murder, on my own," he said. "And I'm staying with you till I find out something. I'm gonna get the jump on that guy Schwartz if I have to tie myself to you."

Harvey looked at him wonderingly. "I don't get it," he said.

O'Reilly dropped two lumps in his coffee before replying. "I figure you do," he finally said. "I saw something in that room that maybe the others didn't. There was a little crescent-shaped line of blood on the carpet, about a foot away from the puddle under the girl's head. Then there was a very faint line, same shape and same size, about five feet nearer to where you were standing when we came in.

"I figure that you accidentally touched the puddle with the tip of your toe. Your girl's shoes were pointed, so it had to be yours. The first mark was made when you shifted your weight, and the second was made when you stepped away. A guy your size takes about two and a half feet to a step."

Harvey nodded and glanced briefly at the toes of his shoes. "The thick carpet wiped it off," he said. "But what makes you think I know something about the murder? It's perfectly natural that I would step over and make sure that the girl was dead and beyond any help."

"That's what I thought at first," O'Reilly confessed. "But then I happened to think that anybody could see a mile away that she had to be dead. With a gash like that, and a bucket of blood . . ."

Harvey refused to comment, merely maintaining a noncommittal expression as he waited for the state trooper to continue.

". . . So I got to figuring that a man's left foot would come pretty close to that puddle if he stooped down to search the body. The medical examiner's did. It just struck me then, that if you had been telling a phoney story to Schwartz, maybe your real reason for going there was to get the same thing that the murderer had been searching for. And that maybe you looked for it on the body. That would mean that you knew what the guy was searching for, and therefore why she was killed. You get the idea?"

Harvey nodded. "An awful lot of maybes," he observed.

"I though it was a good piece of deductive reasoning," said O'Reilly, expanding slightly.

"Well, I don't know a thing about it," said Harvey, flatly.

"What! But you admitted." O'Reilly was aghast. His face went pale, then flooded with color. Such surprises play havoc with a man's blood pressure.

"I ADMITTED nothing except that I may have stepped in the puddle of blood," said Harvey. "*If* I was lying to Schwartz, and *if* I stooped over to search the body, then the rest is true. That only trouble is I wasn't lying. I told Schwartz that an hour before the thing happened I didn't even know the lady's name. I also told him that I was after Danvers, only going to her apartment because I had been told he was with her. And that's the truth."

O'Reilly shoved his hat back on his head and scratched. He did it in a way which suggested that he really didn't expect to find anything, or relieve any particular itch,

Pembroke laid it on the line to Harvey: "I get what I want, and that's all that matters."

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but rather as a gesture intended to stimulate the gray matter which he assumed to be under his moving fingers.

"I guess I don't have the head for this work," he admitted. "I could have sworn there was something . . . Oh, I remember. What were the papers you got from Patelli?"

Harvey started in surprise. "You've been following me ever since then?" he asked. "Then you were the man who drove off in a cab after I went into my flat last night."

"Yeah," O'Reilly grinned. "I went home to get a little sleep."

Harvey grinned, too. "Those papers were private business," he said. "Something which can be explained, if necessary, as plausibly as the matter of my presence in that room."

That O'Reilly didn't like his answer was immediately discernible. Harvey could almost see his mind trying to figure out the next move and so Harvey chose that particular moment to make a quick dash for the elevators. One was opening as he started and he made it with plenty to spare.

O'Reilly tried, but Harvey's sprint had been too sudden for him. The elevator starter clicked his little cricket and the doors slammed shut before he got near them. He fumed and waited for the next car, meanwhile eyeing the arrow which showed the floor stops of the elevator he had missed. Then he turned morosely away and leaned against a wall. The darned thing had stopped three times while he had watched it.

CHAPTER XIX

TWO WEEKS TO DEATH

PEMBROKE, looking quite happy, greeted his visitor with a smile and an extended hand.

"Nelson," he said, before Harvey could open his mouth, "the time has about come for you and me to get together. You've been pretty smart in the past, and I think I can make you see things my way. In fact I was just going to send for you. We have some talking to do."

Harvey smiled amiably. "We certainly have," he said, taking Danvers' confession and placing it on Pembroke's desk. "Look this over before we talk."

Pembroke's poker face revealed nothing as he read the paper carefully and then looked at the ceiling for a long minute. Finally he finished his inspection and evidently concluded that the thing was in no immediate danger of falling, for he lowered his eyes and appraised Harvey carefully.

"You're a smart lad," he observed. "Those lists you got from Dolly Patterson wouldn't have been of much use, except as a means of getting this confession. And the other stuff wouldn't have been of any use at all if Danvers hadn't confessed that he turned all money from such sources over to me. Very clever. However, it was all very unnecessary."

Harvey's eyes narrowed. "What do you mean?"

"It's the same every time," Pembroke said, reflectively. "Someone thinks he can outsmart the old master, and then gets mad when he finds it can't be done. Take a seat, Nelson. I'm waiting for a phone call." He glanced at a clock on the opposite side of the room. "It should have come a couple of minutes ago."

It came. A muted jangling arose from a point beneath the desk. Pembroke reached for the phone. "Wonderful timing," he observed, lifting it from the cradle. After his barked, "Pembroke!" he listened for a moment and remarked. "Okay, I'm putting Nelson on," and handed the instrument to Harvey.

At Millicent's "Hello," Harvey almost dropped the phone. He looked at Pembroke, who was smiling sardonically. Harvey realized that he was licked, thoroughly. Pembroke had talked to Bonzetti after all, but he had arranged to kidnap Milly, not him.

Harvey swallowed, to regain control of paralyzed vocal chords.

"Where are you?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Don't know," said Millicent, her voice shaking in spite of an effort to control it. "Bonzetti blindfolded me."

"Listen carefully," Harvey said, after a pause. "They're going to demand that I support Danvers in return for your continued health. And I'm going to do it—just so long as I hear your voice over the phone whenever I demand it. Now put Bonzetti on and I'll straighten things out."

Harvey turned to Pembroke, who had been listening interestedly. "You're going to give Bonzetti orders to keep his hands off her," he said. "I'll support Danvers as long as she's treated right. The instant she's molested I'm going to blow the works. I'm holding these papers until I get her back."

Pembroke hesitated, thoughtfully. Then he shrugged his shoulders and picked up the telephone. Briefly and forcefully he told Bonzetti what Harvey demanded. Then he hung up and smiled.

"It's a good arrangement," he said. "I get what I want, and that's all that matters. Bonzetti holds your girl until election is over. As soon as Danvers gets the nomination, you and I make our trade. Millicent Forbes in return for those lists, and Danvers' confession. Agreed?"

HARVEY left, his mind seething. Pembroke, the master strategist, knew when he had gained his immediate objective. But there was one weak link in the arrangement; and if Pembroke hadn't thought of it yet, he certainly would later. For as long as Millicent was alive and free, she was a danger to Bonzetti; and he in turn was a danger to Pembroke.

The obvious answer was that neither Bonzetti nor Pembroke could afford to turn her loose. And, also obviously, Harvey was bound by his agreement to exactly the extent to which Pembroke was bound. Which was not at all.

Temporarily at least, Millicent was safe. Election day was two weeks away and Millicent would be treated all right as long as his efforts were necessary to nominate Danvers. But after that—what then? Harvey growled audibly as the elevator door slammed shut. There was only one answer and that was to start work immediately to find her. By election day Millicent must be free; or the day after she would be dead.

"Did you read Pembroke's mind?" Mark demanded. "Where's Milly?"

"Couldn't. I'm too weak yet. Even thought impulses don't register unless they're sent with an effort, as yours are. I can't seem—I think maybe I'd better send you back to the present. Then I'd be able to recuperate my strength. I'm getting worried."

"No! I have no way of knowing what's happened while I'm gone. Hold on to me."

"Don't be silly! This all happened six thousand years ago."

"But you're changing it. It's happening differently now."

"I wonder."

The elevator stopped at the lobby floor. Harvey growled again. O'Reilly grinned like a playful puppy and fell into step.

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"What were you doing upstairs?" he asked, as if he really expected an answer.

"I don't like the men's washrooms on the ground floor," answered Harvey, increasing the length of his stride until O'Reilly fell slightly to the rear.

This wasn't because the state cop was short, for he was fully as tall as Harvey, but rather because his legs weren't quite as long. Harvey opened the door of his car and sat down. O'Reilly sprinted to the other side, intent upon stealing a free ride. But he met an outstretched arm as he attempted to open the door.

On the end of this arm was an open hand, something really phenomenal in hands, one which had stopped many a skillful tackler. It stopped O'Reilly, snapped his head back so suddenly that the bones of his neck crunched together in an alarming manner. By the time he had straightened the neck and determined that it would still support his head with some degree of stability, Harvey's car had roared out from beneath his outraged nose.

Officer O'Reilly really suffered as he saw the pleased expression on the face of the cab driver when he demanded that he follow the speeding sedan. It seemed that the fellow actually knew that he was getting a chance to get even with constabulary in general.

Harvey drove furiously, while his mind did its best to keep pace. This was a bad combination of activities, for he was thinking of other things besides driving. The result was a series of close ones; but finally he arrived at his destination in one piece. Physically at least. Patelli's club was the destination.

A hostile-eyed bartender took his order for a double scotch, straight. Harvey had never seen the man before, no doubt because his working hours didn't extend into the evenin.g

"Where's Patelli?" asked Harvey.

"Home in bed, I guess," said the man. "What d'ya want?"

"Where's he live?"

The bartender gestured.

"He's in the phone book, if you really want to know. You don't catch me sending a salesman around to wake him up."

Harvey slugged down the drink, muttered under his breath, and found a directory. Sure enough, Patelli was listed. Harvey wasted no time in calling him. He watched the door to the club as he listened to the buzz of the bell ringer. He half expected to see O'Reilly pop in, wild-eyed.

Something else popped, however.

A sudden roar sounded in his ear. He moved the receiver an inch or so away, and gradually the sound became articulate, though sulphurous. He understood why the bartender wanted no part in the waking of Patelli. It was a job for a lion tamer.

"Take it easy, Joe," he soothed. "This is Harvey Nelson. Something's come up that's more important than anybody's sleep. I've got to talk to you, right away. Shall I come up, or will you see me at the club?"

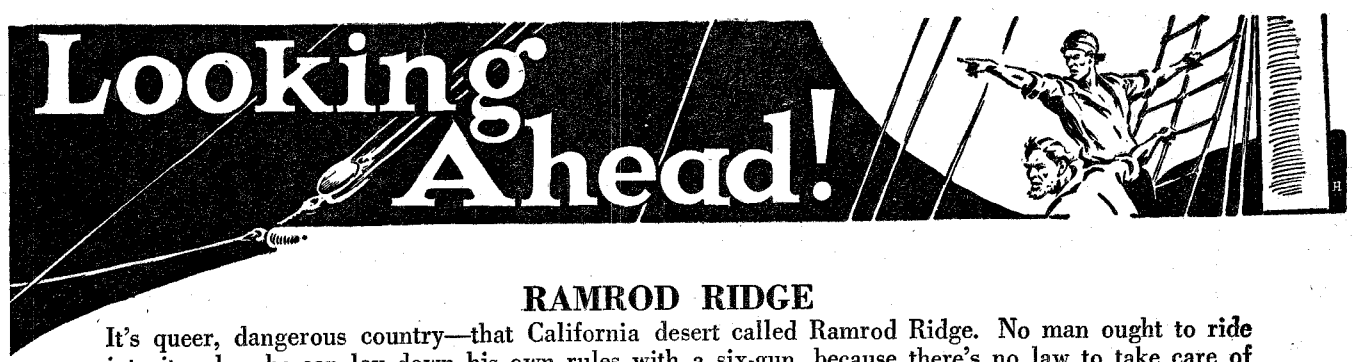
There was a short pause. Then: "Come up here. It'll be quicker."

Harvey noted the address, at the northern end of town, and sprinted for the curb. His car roared down the one-way street and made a forbidden left turn at Broad, a through street north and south. Several whistles blew before he reached Patelli's address, but Harvey didn't slow down in the least. He'd collect a flock of summonses, of course, but he'd take care of them later.

Right now he had to get the machinery started, and the machinery he was thinking of might turn out to be almost as ponderous as that of the law which he couldn't enlist. Two weeks could, upon occasion, go past with startling speed.

By election day Milly must be free; or the day after *she'd be dead.*

TO BE CONCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE



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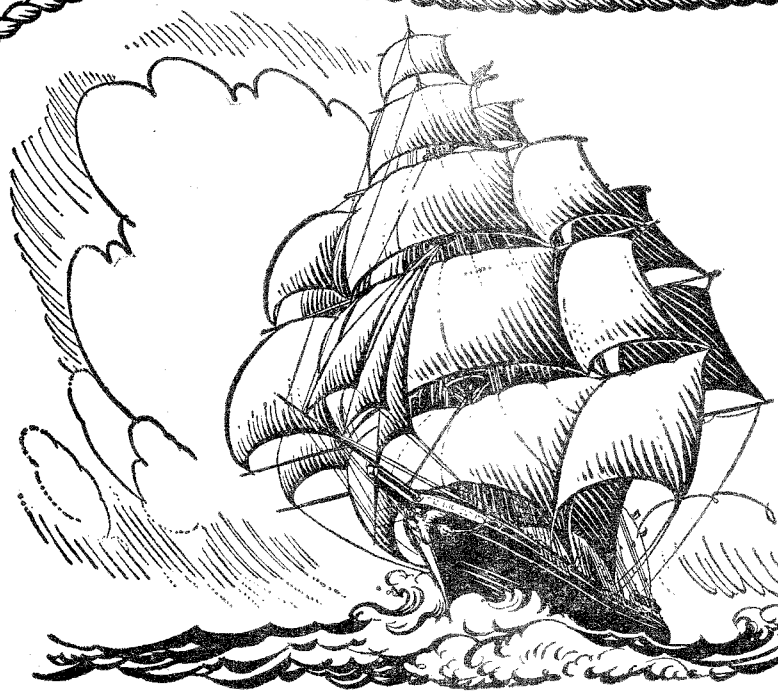

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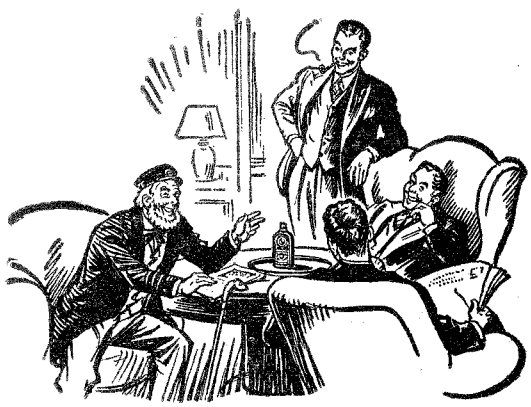

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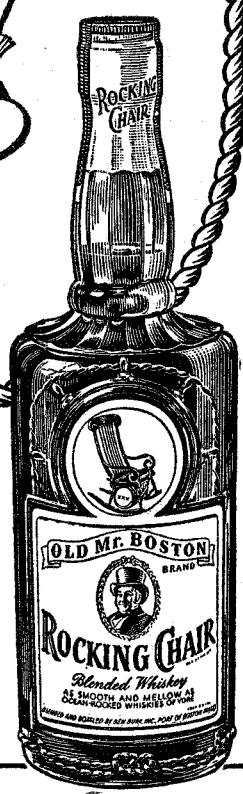

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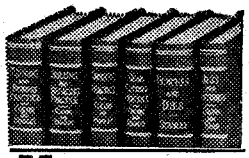

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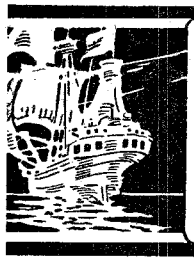

Argonotes

The Readers' Viewpoint

THERE is fall in the air today—a sharp, stimulating flavor; and consequently we have been brisk as all getout. We have polished off our daily stint with fine efficiency, to the dismay and suspicion of our colleagues and somewhat to our own bewilderment. For we had never considered ourselves to be particularly sensitive to weather conditions. Perhaps it is growing on us.

It's a little disturbing, because this kind of thing can go too far. Either we've got to control our weather-sensitivity, or the weather will have to remain fixed at fair and cool with light winds. A heavy rain might very well send us into suicidal despondency; a hot spell might stretch us helpless on the floor, damp and gasping. What hope would there be for a man who started snarling as soon as a small cloud floated across the sun? No, we don't like the thought of it; but we can't get too worried right now—not when it's such a swell day.

Now, first of all, a letter from a loyal reader out West.

E. J. ALLEN

I live in Seattle but spend part of the time in two small towns and one country place, sometimes staying a month or more. No ARGOSY to be found, and that means tragedy when you are reading a continued story. So I am overcoming that by taking a year's subscription to my favorite magazine.

I enjoy Argonotes and would like to give my viewpoint with the rest of the readers. The continued stories are always good, but once in a while I find a short story I don't particularly care for. But that doesn't mean a thing; the stories weren't written for me alone, and what I don't care for some other reader will. I would not give it a second thought, only some readers do when they don't like a story.

However, the short stories in the August 2nd ARGOSY were much better, and "Northward Rails" was much better, and I hope our ARGOSY authors will keep up the good work. I suppose when I tell you I am eighty-two years of age you will say, Oh, she is old-fashioned. Anyway I've had my say.

Seattle, Wash.

IT'S an extremely nice letter, and no reader who follows ARGOSY with enthusiasm and attention could be called old-fashioned.

You may remember that a while ago we had a letter criticizing Stookie Allen's bulls in one of the Men of Daring features. Well, it begins to look as if the bullfight discussion might turn into one of those inexhaustible affairs, like icicles in Alaska or the Civil War. For here is new fuel from

MARION REESE

In the August 23rd number I read Mr. W. B. Engler's letter on bullfights. I have lived in Portgual and Spain a good many years and have seen hundreds of bullfights in both countries. I have seen all the first-flight fighters, both men and women.

I went to Spain first in 1898 from Boston where I was born and came back to America shortly after the start of the Spanish revolution. In all the bullfights I have seen I have never seen a bull's horns covered in any way. I have seen several fine horses gored to death in Portugal and one or two top-flight bullfighters killed.

Mr. Engler is right that the bulls are killed from a horse in Portugal. I know; I was there. I have many pictures of fights that show horse, matador and bull, and in all of them you can see the bull's horns very plainly. There are no "boxing gloves" on any of them. The bullfight fan in both countries is a very bloodthirsty gent and he wouldn't stand for anything like that.

I remember seeing an American cowboy fight a bull from a horse in Lisbon. I have his picture in front of me now. He killed the bull with a lance and did it with all the skill of a top-flight fighter.

This picture of him shows the bull's horns; they were not only untipped but sharpened. Just so Mr. Engler will not think I am kidding him—I have the posters of that fight. I will be glad to have him see them (if he can read Portuguese). The American cowboy was called Dude Dalton and he lived in Lisbon about six months, riding fighting bulls bareback with one hand on a loose rope as an added attraction. I never saw a boxing glove on any of the bulls he rode.

Hollywood, Calif.

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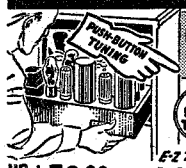

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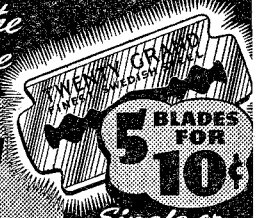

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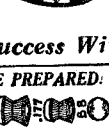

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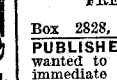

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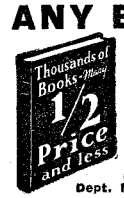

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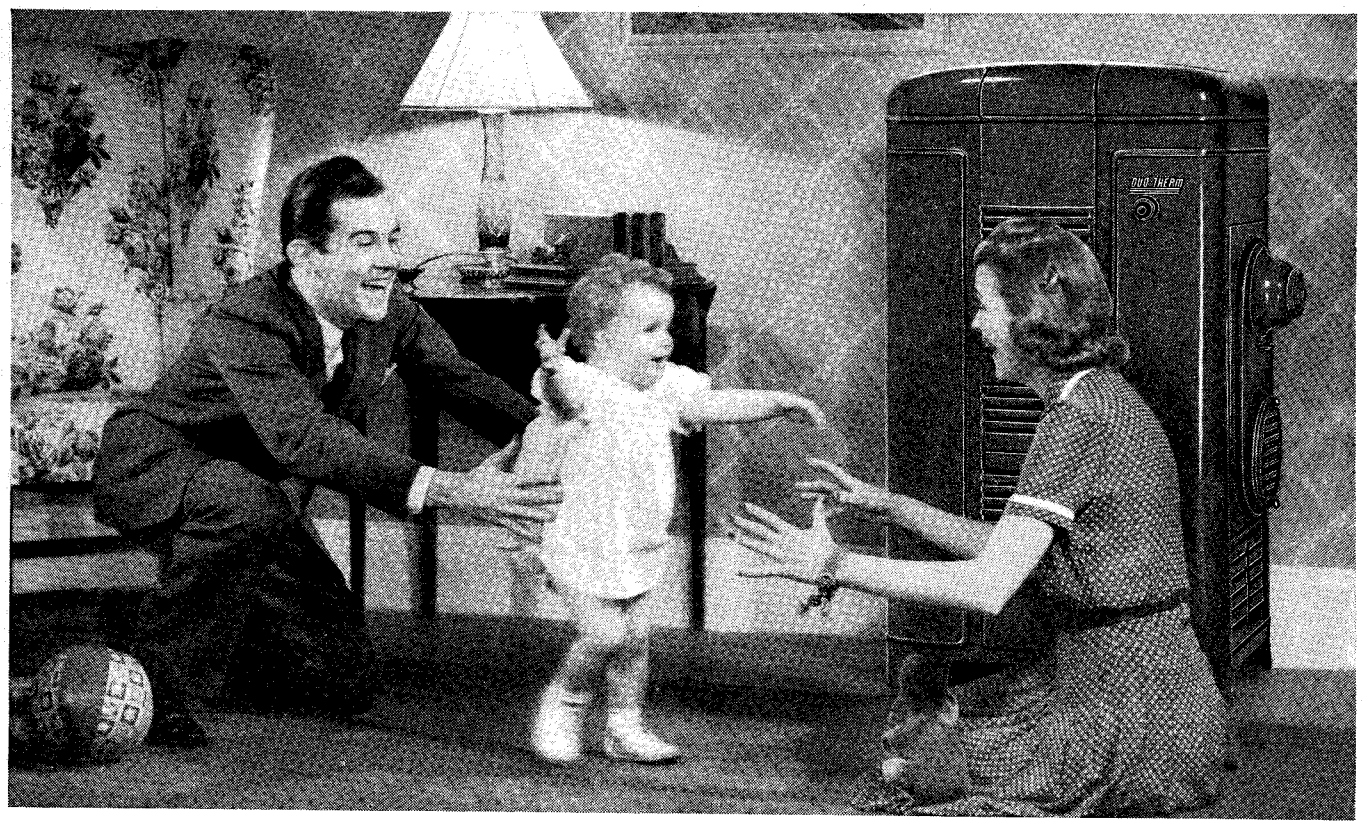

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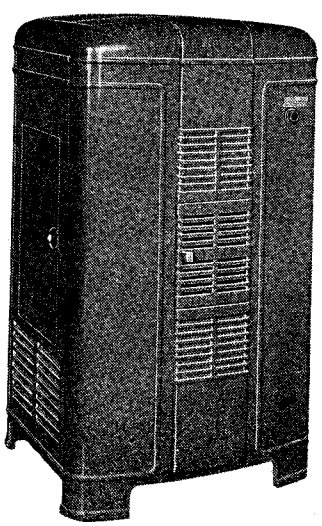

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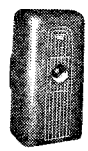

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